

# INTRODUCTION

TO

# THE PROPHET

# OBADIAH.

---

THE silence of Holy Scripture as to the Prophet Obadiah stands in remarkable contrast with the anxiety of men to know something of him. It were even waste labor to examine the combinations, by which, of old, the human mind tried to justify its longing to know more of him, than God had willed to be preserved. Men go over them with the view of triumphing in the superior sagacity of later days, and slaying the slain. It was a good and pious feeling which longed to know more of the men of God, whose prophecies He has preserved to us, and, with this view, looked about whether they could not identify their benefactor (such as each Prophet is) with some one of whom more details are recorded. Hence they hoped that Obadiah might prove to have been the faithful protector of the prophets under Ahab, or the son of the Shunamite, whom Elijah recalled to life, or the Obadiah whom Jehoshaphat sent to teach in the cities of Judah\* or the Levite who was selected, with one other, to be the overseer set over the repair of the temple in the reign of Josiah<sup>b</sup>. Fruitless guesses at what God has hidden! God has willed that his name alone and this brief prophecy should be known in this world. Here, he is known only as Obadiah, "worshiper of God."

Yet these guesses of pious minds illustrate this point, that the arranger of the Canon had some other ground upon which he assigned to Obadiah his place in it, than any identification of the Prophet with any other person mentioned in Holy Scripture. For whereas, of the Obadias, of whom Holy

Scripture mentions more than the name, two lived in the reign of Ahab, one after the captivity of the ten tribes, the Prophet is, by the framer of the Canon, placed in the time of Uzziah and Jeroboam II., in which those placed before and after him, flourished. Moderns, having slighted these pious longings, are still more at fault in their way. German critics have assigned to the Prophet dates, removed from each other by above 600 years; just as if men doubted, *from internal evidence*, whether a work were written in the time of William the Conqueror, or in that of Cromwell; of S. Louis, or Louis XVIII.; or whether Hesiod was a contemporary of Callimachus, and Ennius of Claudian; or the author of the Nibelungen Lied lived with Schiller. Such difference, which seems grotesque, as soon as it is applied to any other case, was the fruit of unbelief. Two or rather three great facts are spoken of in the prophecy, the capture of Jerusalem, and a two-fold punishment of Edom consequent on his malicious triumph over his brother's fall; the one through Heathen, the other through the restored Jews. The punishment of Edom the Prophet clearly foretells, as yet to come; the destruction of Jerusalem, which, according to our version is spoken of as past, is in reality foretold also. Unbelief denies all prophecy. Strange, that unbelief, denying the existence of the jewel—God's authentic and authenticated voice to man—should trouble itself about the age of the casket. Yet so it was. The prophets of Israel used a fascinating power over those who denied their inspiration. They denied

\* 2 Chr. xvii. 7.  
<sup>b</sup> 1b. xxxiv. 12.

\* Obadiah is "worshiper of the Lord;" Abdi, or Abdiah, "the servant of the Lord."

prophecy, but employed themselves about the Prophets. Unbelief, denying prophecy, had to find out two events in history, which should correspond with these events in the Prophet, a capture of Jerusalem, and a subsequent,—it could not say, consequent,—suffering on the part of Edom. And since Jerusalem was first taken under Shishak king of Egypt, in the 5th year of Rehoboam, B.C. 970, and Josephus relates<sup>a</sup>, that B.C. 301, Ptolemy Lagus treacherously got possession of it under plea of offering sacrifice, treated it harshly, took many captive from the mountainous part of Judaea and the places round Jerusalem, from Samaritis, Gerizim, and settled them all in Egypt; unbelieving criticism had a wide range, in which to vacillate. And so it reeled to and fro between the first and last of these periods, agreeing that Obadiah did not prophesy, and disagreeing as to all besides. Eichhorn<sup>c</sup>, avowedly on his principle of unbelief, that God's prophets, when they spoke of detailed events, as future, were really describing the past, assumed that the last five verses were written in the time of Alexander Jannæus, two centuries later than the latest, about B.C. 82<sup>f</sup>. As though a Hebrew prophet would speak of one, detestable for his wanton cruelty<sup>g</sup>, as a Saviour!

The real question as to the age of Obadiah turns upon two points, the one external, the other internal. The external is, whether in regard to those verses which he has in common with Jeremiah, Obadiah gathered into one, verses which lie scattered in Jeremiah, or whether Jeremiah, in renewing the prophecies against Edom, incorporated verses of Obadiah. The question, internal to Obadiah, is, whether he speaks of the capture of Jerusalem in the prophetic or the real past, and (as determining this), whether he reproves Edom for past malice at the capture of Jerusalem, or warns him against it in the future.

The English version in the text supposes that Obadiah reproves for past sin. For it renders; *Thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day when he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of their distress*<sup>h</sup>. The English margin gives the other, as a probable rendering, *do not behold, &c.* But it is absolutely certain that *al* with the future forbids or deprecates a thing future. In all the passages, in which *al* occurs in the Hebrew Bible, it signifies "do not." We might as well say that "do not steal" means "thou shouldest not have stolen," as say that *veal*

*têrch*, and do not look, means "thou shouldest not have looked." It is true that in a vivid form of question, belonging to strong feeling, the soul going back in thought to the time before a thing happened, can speak of the past as yet future. Thus David says<sup>k</sup>, *The death of fools shall Abner die?* while mourning over his bier; or Job, having said to God, *why didst Thou bring me forth from the womb?* places himself as at that time and says<sup>l</sup> (literally), *I shall expire, and eye shall not see me; as if I had not been, I shall be; from the womb to the grave I shall be carried.* He contemplates the future, as it would have been, had he died in the birth. It was a relative future. We could almost, under strong emotion, use our "is to" in the same way. We could render, *Is Abner to die the death of fools?* But these cases have nothing to do with the uniform idiom; "do not." We must not, on any principle of interpretation, in a single instance, ascribe to a common idiom, a meaning which it has not, because the meaning which it has, does not suit us. There is an idiom to express this. It is the future with *lo*, not with *al*.

It agrees with this, that just before<sup>m</sup>, where our version renders, *thou wert as one of them*, the Hebrew (as, in our Bibles, is marked by the Italics) has only, *thou as one of them!* not expressing any time. The whole verse expresses no time as to Edom. *In the day of thy standing on the other side, in the day of strangers carrying captive his might, and strangers entered his gates and cast lots on Jerusalem, thou too as one of them.*

This too is a question not of rhetoric, but of morals. We cannot imagine that Almighty God, Who warns that he may not strike, would eight times repeat the exhortation,—a repetition which in itself has so much earnestness, "do not," "do not," "do not," in regard to sin which had been already ended. As to past sin, God exhorts to repent, to break it off, not to renew it. He does not exhort to that which would be a contradiction even to His own Omnipotence, not to do what had been already done.

According to the only meaning, then, which the words bear, Edom had not yet committed the sin against which Obadiah warns him, and so Jerusalem was not yet destroyed, when the Prophet wrote. For the sevenfold<sup>n</sup>, *the day of thy brother*, (which is explained to be *the day of his calamity*), *the day of their destruction, the day of distress*, the mention whereof had just preceded, can be no other than *the day when strangers carried away his strength, and foreigners entered his gates, and cast lots on Jerusalem.* But no day was the day of utter destruction to Jerusa-

<sup>a</sup> Ant. xii. 1. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Einl. ins. A. T. iv. § 570.

<sup>f</sup> i. e. three years before his death. Jos. Ant. xiii. 15. 4.

<sup>g</sup> See Jos. Ib. xiii. 14. and 15.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 12, and so in ver. 13, 14.

<sup>k</sup> Calasio's Concordance furnishes 207 instances.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Sam. iii. 33.

<sup>m</sup> Job x. 18. 19.

<sup>n</sup> ver. 11.

<sup>o</sup> ver. 12-14.

lem, except that of its capture by Nebuchadnezzar. Its capture by Shishak\*, or by the Chaldees under Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin<sup>2</sup>, left it uninjured; Jehoash, when he had defeated Amaziah, broke down a part of its walls only<sup>3</sup>.

The relation of Obadiah to Jeremiah agrees with this. This argument in proof of that relation has been so carefully drawn out by Caspari<sup>4</sup>, that little is needed except clearly to exhibit it. Few indeed, I should think, (unless under some strong contrary bias), could read the five first verses of Obadiah in the book of the Prophet himself, and, as they occur, scattered in the 49th chapter of Jeremiah, and not be convinced that Jeremiah reset the words of Obadiah in his own prophecy.

This is, in itself, probable, because Jeremiah certainly incorporated eight verses of Isaiah in his prophecy against Moab<sup>5</sup>, and four of the same Prophet in his prophecy against Babylon<sup>6</sup>, in addition to several allusions to his prophecies contained in a word or idiom, or mode of expression<sup>7</sup>. In like way, he closes his prophecy against Damascus, with a verse from the prophecy of Amos against it<sup>8</sup>; and he inserts a verse of Amos against Ammon in his own prophecy against that people<sup>9</sup>. This is the more remarkable, because the prophecy of Amos against each people consists of three verses only. This, of course, was done designedly. Probably in renewing the prophecies against those nations, Jeremiah wished to point out that those former prophecies were still in force; that they had not yet been exhausted; that the threatenings of God were not the less certain, because they were delayed; that His word would not the less come true, because He was long-suffering. The insertion of these former prophecies, longer or shorter, are a characteristic of Jeremiah's prophecies against the nations, occurring, as they do, in those against Babylon, Damascus, Moab, Ammon, and therefore probably in that also against Edom.

The eight verses, moreover, common to Obadiah and Jeremiah form one whole in Obadiah; in Jeremiah they are scattered amid other verses of his own, in precisely the same way as we know that he introduced verses of Isaiah against Moab. But beside this analogy of the relation of the prophecy of Jeremiah to that of Isaiah, it is plainly

more natural to suppose that Jeremiah enlarged an existing prophecy, adding to it words which God gave him, than that Obadiah put together scattered sayings of Jeremiah, and yet that these sayings, thus severed from their context, should still have formed as they do, one compact, connected whole.

Yet this is the case as to these verses of Obadiah. Apart, for the time, from the poetic imagery, the connection of thought in Obadiah's prophecy is this; 1) God had commanded nations to come against Edom, 2) determining to lower it; 3) it had trusted proudly in its strong position; 4) yet God would bring it down; and that, 5) through no ordinary spoiler, but 6) by one who should search out its most hidden treasures; 7) its friends should be its destroyers; 8) its wisdom, and 9) might should fail it, and 10) it should perish, for its malice to its brother Jacob; the crowning act of which would be at the capture of Jerusalem; (11-14) but God's day was at hand, the heathen should be required; (15, 16) the remnant of Zion, being delivered, would dispossess their dispossessors, would spread far and wide; (17-20) a Saviour should arise out of Zion, and the kingdom should be the Lord's. (21)

Thus, not the eight verses only of Obadiah, five of which recur in Jeremiah, and three others, to which he alludes, stand in close connection in Obadiah, but they form a part of one well-arranged whole. The connection is sometimes very close indeed; as when, to the proud question of Esau, *mi yoridemi arets*<sup>10</sup>, who will bring me down to the ground? God answers, *though thou place thy nest among the stars, mishsham orideca*<sup>11</sup>, thence will I bring thee down.

Jeremiah, on the contrary, the mourner among the prophets, is plaintive, even in his prophecies against the enemies of God's people. Even in this prophecy he mingles words of tenderness<sup>12</sup>; *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in Me*. Jeremiah, accordingly, has a succession of striking pictures; but the connection in him is rather one of oratory than of thought. His object is to impress; he does impress, by an accumulation of images of terror or desolation. Closeness of thought would not aid his object, and he neglects it, except when he retains the order of Obadiah. But plainly it is most probable,

\* 1 Kings xiv. 25-27.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings xxiv. 2 Chr. xxxvi. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chr. xxxvi. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Der Prophet Obadiah, pp. 4. sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. xlviii. 29, 30, from Is. xvi. 6; Jer. xlviii. 31, from Is. xv. 5, xvi. 7, 11; Jer. xlviii. 32, from Is. xvi. 8, 9, 10; Jer. xlviii. 34, from Is. xv. 4-6; Jer. xlviii. 36, from Is. xvi. 11, xv. 7; Jer. xlviii. 37, from Is. xv. 2, 3; also Jer. xlviii. 43, 44, from Is. xxiv. 17, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Jer. l. 10, from Is. xlii. 14; Jer. l. 39; from Is. xlii. 21, 20; and Jer. l. 40, from Is. xlii. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Jer. l. 2. refers to Is. xli. 1; Jer. l. 8, to Is. xlviii. 20; Jer. l. 23, to Is. xiv. 6, 4; Jer. l. 25, to Is. xlii. 6; Jer. l. 34, to Is. xlvii. 4; Jer. l. 38, to Is. xlv. 27; Jer. li. 11, to Is. xlii. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Jer. xlix. 27. from Am. i. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Am. i. 15, in Jer. xlix. 3, besides the allusion in ver. 2. *כאש תצתנה* and *תרוות מלחמה*.

<sup>10</sup> *מי יורידני ארץ* ver. 3. *משם אורידני* ver. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *xlix. 11.*

that *that* is the original form of the prophecy, where the order is the sequence of thought. That sequence is a characteristic, not of these verses only of Obadiah, but of the whole. The whole twenty-one verses of the Prophet pursue one connected train of thought, from the beginning to the end. No one verse could be displaced, without injuring that order. Thoughts flow on, the one out of the other. But nothing is more improbable than to suppose that this connected train of thought was produced by putting together thoughts, which originally stood unconnected.

The slight variations also in these verses, as they stand in the two prophets, are characteristic. Wherever the two prophets in any degree vary, Obadiah is the more concise, or abrupt; Jeremiah, as belongs to his pathetic character, the more flowing. Thus Obadiah begins, *Thus saith the Lord God, of Edom. A report we have heard from the Lord, and a messenger among the heathen is sent; Arise and let us arise against her to battle.* The words, *Thus saith the Lord God, of Edom*, declare that the whole prophecy which follows came from God; then Obadiah bursts forth with what he had heard from God, *A report we have heard from the Lord.* The words are joined in meaning; the grammatical connection, if regarded, would be incorrect. Again, in the words, *we have heard*, the Prophet joins his people with himself. Jeremiah substitutes the more precise, *I have heard*, transposes the words to a later part of the prophecy, and so obviates the difficulty of the connection: then he substitutes the regular form, *shulach*, for the irregular, *shullach*; and for the one abrupt sentence, *Arise, and arise we against her to battle*, he substitutes the Hebrew parallelism, *Gather ye yourselves and come against her; and arise to battle.* Next, Obadiah has, *Behold! small have I made thee among the nations; despised art thou exceedingly.* Jeremiah connects the verse with the preceding by the addition of the particle *for*, and makes the whole flow on, depending on the word, *I have made.* *For behold! small have I made thee among the heathen, despised among men.* Obadiah, disregarding rules of parallelism, says; *The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, dweller in rock-clefts, his lofty sent; who says in his heart, who will bring me down to the earth?* Jeremiah with a softer flow; *Thy alarmness hath deceived thee, the pride of thy heart; dweller in the clefts of the rock, hohling the height of a hill.* Obadiah has very boldly;

*Though thou exalt as the eagle, and though amid stars set thy nest, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.* Jeremiah contracts this, omits an idiom, for boldness, almost alone in Hebrew, *veim bein cocubim sim*, and *though amid stars set*, and has only, *when thou exaltest, as an eagle, thy nest, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord*, where also, through the omission of the words "amid stars," the word "thence" has, in Jeremiah, no exact antecedent. In like way Jeremiah smooths down the abrupt appeal, *If thieves had come to thee, if spoilers of the night (how art thou cut off!) will they not steal their enough? If grape-gatherers had come to thee, will they not leave gleanings?* Jeremiah changes it into two even half-verses; *If grape-gatherers had come to thee, will they not leave gleanings? If thieves by night, they had spoiled their enough.* Again, for the 5 bold words of Obadiah, *eik nechphesu Esau, nib'u mut-mumain*, lit. *how are Esau outsearched, sought out his hidden places*, Jeremiah substitutes, *For I have laid bare Esau; I have discovered his hidden places, and he cannot be hid.*

Again, even an English reader of Jeremiah will have noticed that Jeremiah has many idioms or phrases or images, which he has pleasure in repeating. They are characteristic of his style. Now, in these verses which Obadiah and Jeremiah have in common, there is no one idiom which occurs elsewhere in Jeremiah; whereas, in the other verses of the prophecy of Jeremiah against Edom, in which they are, as it were, inlaid, there are several such, so to say, favorite turns of expressions. As such, there have been noticed, the short abrupt questions with which Jeremiah opens his prophecy against Edom<sup>a</sup>; *Is wisdom no more in Teman?* the hurried imperatives accumulated on one another<sup>b</sup>, *Place, turn, dwell deep*; the accumulation of words expressive of desolation<sup>c</sup>; *Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste and a curse; and all her cities, perpetual wastes*; the combination of the two strong words, *shall be stupefied, shall hiss*, in amazement at her overthrow; *Every one who goeth by her shall be stupefied* [we say "struck dumb"] *and shall hiss at all her plagues.* Such again are the comparison to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah<sup>d</sup>; the image of "the lion coming up from the pride of Jordan"; the burden of these prophecies, *the day of the destruction of Edom and time of his visitation.* <sup>e</sup> *Wherefore hear ye the counsel of the Lord against Edom and His purposes which He has purposed toward Teman.* Then

from the vision, 1 Kings ix. 8, also Ezek. xxvii. 36, Zeph. ii. 15.

<sup>b</sup> xlix. 18, comp. l. 40. <sup>c</sup> xlix. 19, comp. l. 44.

<sup>d</sup> xlix. 8, comp. xli. 21, l. 27, 31, xlviii. 44, vi. 15, x. 15.

<sup>e</sup> xlix. 20 repeated l. 45. חשב מן שבות occurs more in Jeremiah than in any other Book; xi. 19, xviii. 11, 18, xxix. 11, xlix. 30.

<sup>a</sup> xlix. 7, comp. ii. 14, viii. 19, xiv. 19, xviii. 14, 20, xxii. 28, xxx. 6, xxxi. 20, xlix. 1.

<sup>b</sup> xlix. 8, comp. xlix. 30, xlviii. 6.

<sup>c</sup> xlix. 13, comp. xxiv. 9, xxv. 9, 18, xxix. 18, xlii. 18, xlv. 12, 24, besides other accumulations as in vii. 34, xxii. 5, or lesser degrees of accumulation, fullness of language being a characteristic of Jeremiah.

<sup>d</sup> xlix. 17, comp. xviii. 16, xix. 8, l. 13, Lam. ii. 15.

also, whole verses are repeated in these prophecies<sup>m</sup>.

Out of 16 verses of which the prophecy of Jeremiah against Edom consists, four are identical with those of Obadiah; a fifth embodies a verse of Obadiah's; of the eleven which remain, ten have some turns of expression or idioms, more or fewer, which recur in Jeremiah, either in these prophecies against foreign nations, or in his prophecies generally. Now it would be wholly improbable that a prophet, selecting verses out of the prophecy of Jeremiah, should have selected precisely those which contain none of Jeremiah's characteristic expressions; whereas it perfectly fits in with the supposition that Jeremiah interwove verses of Obadiah with his own prophecy, that in verses so interwoven there is not one expression which occurs elsewhere in Jeremiah.

One expression, which has been cited as an exception, if it is more than an accidental coincidence, the rather confirms this. Obadiah, in one of the earlier verses which Jeremiah has not here employed, says, *To the border have sent thee forth the men of thy covenant; the men of thy peace have deceived thee, have prevailed against thee; thy bread* [i. e. the men of thy bread, they who ate bread with thee] *have laid a snare under thee*. In the middle of this threefold retribution for their misdealing to their brother Judah, there occur the words, *the men of thy peace*, which are probably taken from a Psalm of David<sup>n</sup>. But the word *hishshiucha*, "have deceived thee," corresponds to the word *hishshiecha*<sup>o</sup> in v. 3. "deceived thee hath the pride of thy heart." The deceit on the part of their allies was the fruit and consequence of their self-deceit through the pride of their own heart. The verse in Obadiah then stands in connection with the preceding, and it is characteristic of Obadiah to make one part of his prophecy bear upon another, to shew the connection of thoughts and events by the connection of words. The taunting words against Zedekiah, which Jeremiah puts into the mouth of the women left in the house, when they should be brought before the king of Babylon's princes, *Thy friends*, lit. *the men of thy peace*, *have set thee on*, *hissithruca*<sup>p</sup>, and *have prevailed against thee*, may very probably be a reminiscence of the words of Obadiah (although only the words, *men of thy peace*, are the same): but they stand in no connection with any other words in Jeremiah, as those of Obadiah do with the previous words.

The prophecy of Jeremiah in which he incorporated these words of Obadiah, itself also speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem as still

future. For he says to Edom<sup>q</sup>, *Lo! they whose judgment was not to drink the cup, shall indeed drink it; and shalt thou be unpunished? Thou shalt not be unpunished; for thou shalt indeed drink it*. It is plainly wrong (as even our own Version has done) to render the self-same expression *shatho yishtu* as past, in the first place, *have assuredly drunken*, and as future in the second, *ki shatho tishteh*<sup>r</sup>, *for thou shalt surely drink of it*. Since they must be future in the second place, so must they also in the first. Jeremiah too elsewhere contrasts, as future, God's dealings with His own people and with the nations, in this self-same form of words. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink; for lo! I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by My Name, and shall ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished; for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts. The form of words, *hinneh bair anochi mechel leharea'*, in itself requires, at least a proximate future, (for *hinneh* with a participle always denotes a future, nearer or further) and the words themselves were spoken in the fourth year of Jehoiakim.

In that same fourth year of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah received from God the command to write in that roll which Jehoiakim burnt when a little of it had been read to him<sup>s</sup>, *all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel and against Judah and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah even unto this day*. After Jehoiakim had burnt the roll, that same collection was renewed, at God's command, with many like words<sup>t</sup>. Now immediately upon this, follows, in the book of Jeremiah, the collection of prophecies against the foreign nations, and in this collection three contain some notice that they were written in that 4th year of Jehoiakim, and only the two last, those against Elam and Babylon, which may have been added to the collection, bear any later date. The prophecy against Babylon is at its close marked as wholly by itself<sup>u</sup>. For Seraiah is bidden, when he had come to Babylon, and had made an end of reading the book, to bind a stone upon it, and cast it into the Euphrates, and say, *Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again from the evil which I bring upon her*. These chapters then as to Babylon, although connected with the preceding in that they are prophecies against enemies of God's people, are marked as in one way detached from them, a book<sup>v</sup> by themselves. And in conformity with this, they are stated, in the beginning, to have been written in the 4th year of Zedekiah. In like way, the prophecy against Elam,

<sup>m</sup> xlix. 18 repeated xlix. 33, l. 40, li. 43; and xlix. 22 in xlviii. 40, l.

<sup>n</sup> Ps. xli. 10.

<sup>o</sup> xlix. 12. <sup>p</sup> Jer. xxxviii. 22. <sup>q</sup> xlix. 12.

כי שתו תשתה, שתו ישתו.

<sup>r</sup> xxv. 28, 29.

הנה בעיר אנכי מחל להרעי.

<sup>s</sup> xxv. 1.

<sup>t</sup> xxxvi. 1, 2.

<sup>u</sup> Jer. li. 60-4.

<sup>v</sup> Ib. 60, 63.

which was uttered in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, was occasioned probably by misdeeds of that then savage people, serving, as they did, in the army of the Chaldees<sup>7</sup> against Jerusalem, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakim captive to Babylon. It is distinguished from the earlier prophecies, in that Elam was no inveterate enemy of God's people, and the instrument of his chastisement was not to be Babylon.

Those earlier prophecies (ch. xlii-xlix. 33.) against Egypt, Philistia (including Tyre and Zidon), Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, all have this in common; 1) that they are directed against old and inveterate enemies of God's people; 2) they all threaten destruction from one source, the North<sup>8</sup>, or Nebuchadnezzar himself, either naming<sup>9</sup> or describing him<sup>10</sup>. They are then probably one whole, a book of the visitations of God upon His enemies through Nebuchadnezzar. But the first of the two prophecies against Egypt relates to the expulsion of Pharaoh Necho against Assyria, the utter overthrow of whose vast army at the Euphrates he foretells. That overthrow took place at Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim<sup>11</sup>. The next prophecy against Egypt relates to the expedition of Nebuchadnezzar against it, which followed immediately on the defeat of Pharaoh<sup>12</sup>. The third prophecy against Philistia was, *before Pharaoh smote Gaza*<sup>13</sup>; but this was probably on his march against Assyria in that same fourth year of Jehoiakim, before his own power was broken for ever.

But since the prophecy of Obadiah was anterior to that of Jeremiah, it was probably long anterior to it. For Jeremiah probably incorporated it, in order to shew that there was yet a fulfillment in store for it. And with this it agrees, that Obadiah does employ in his prophecy language of Balaam, of a Psalm of David, of Joel and Amos, and of no later prophet. This could not have been otherwise, if he lived at the time, when he is placed in the series of the Minor Prophets. Had he lived later, it is inconceivable that, using of set purpose, as he does, language of Joel and Amos, his prophecy should exhibit no trace of any other later writing. The expressions taken from the book of Joel are remarkable, considering the small extent of both books. Such are undoubtedly the phrases; *4, Jerusalem, shall be*

*holiness, kodesh*<sup>1</sup>; *In mount Zion there shall be a remnant*<sup>2</sup>; *For near is the Day of the Lord*<sup>3</sup>; *I will return thy recompense upon thy head*<sup>4</sup>, the phrase *yaddu goral*<sup>5</sup> for "cast lots." These are not chance idioms. They are not language of imagery. They are distinguished in no poetical or rhetorical manner from idioms which are not used. They are not employed, because they strike the senses or the imagination. One prophet does not borrow the imagery of another. They are part of the religious language of prophecy, in which when religious truth had once been embodied, the prophets handed it on from one generation to another. These words were like some notes of a loved and familiar melody, which brought back to the soul the whole strain, of which they were a part. *The Day of the Lord* having been described in such awful majesty by Joel, thenceforth the saying, *near is the Day of the Lord*, repeated in his own simple words, conveyed to the mind all those circumstances of awe, with which it was invested. In like way the two words, *it shall be holiness*, suggested all that fullness of the outpouring of God's Spirit, the sole Source of holiness, with which the words were associated in Joel; they are full of the Gospel promise, that the Church should be not holy only, but the depository of holiness, the appointed instrument through which God would diffuse it. Equally characteristic is that other expression; *In Mount Zion shall be a remnant*. It gives prominence to that truth, so contrary to flesh and blood, which S. Paul had to develop, that *all were not Israel who were of Israel*<sup>6</sup>. It presented at once the positive and negative side of God's mercies, that there would be *salvation in Mount Zion*, but of a *remnant* only. So, on the other side, the use of the idiom *mechamas achica Yaakov*, repeated but intensified from that of Joel, *mechamas benè Yehudah*, continued on the witness against that abiding sin for which Joel had foretold the desolation of Edom, *his violence toward his brother Jacob*.

The promise in Amos of the expansion of Jacob, that *they may inherit the residue of Edom, and all nations upon whom My Name is called*, is, in like way, the basis of the detailed promise of its expansion in all directions, E. W. N. S. which Obadiah, like Amos, begins with the promise, that the people of God should inherit Edom: *And the South shall inherit Mount Esau, and the plain*

<sup>7</sup> Is. xxii. 6, Ezek. xxxii. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Jer. xlii. 10, 20, 24, xliii. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Jer. xlii. 2, 13, 26, xlix. 28, 30.

<sup>10</sup> Jer. xliiii. 40, xlix. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ib. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Jer. xlii. 2.

<sup>13</sup> xliii. 1.

Joel Ob. 17. והיה ירושלם קדש Ob. 17. והיה קדש  
יב. 17.

כי בהר ציון Ob. 17. ובהר ציון תהיה פלטה  
Joel iii. 5. וכירושלם תהיה פלטה

כי קרוב Ob. 15. כי קרוב יום יי על כל הגוים  
Joel i. 15. יום יי בעטק החורין

אשיב גמלכם Ob. 15. גמלך ישוב בראשך  
והשנתי גמלכם בראשכם Joel iv. 4. כראשכם  
iv. 7.

גורל Ob. 11, Joel iv. 3; also only in Nah.

iii. 10. Elsewhere with גורל there are united

ידד. הפיל, השליך, ידה.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ix. 6.

the Philistines. Amos, taking Edom as a specimen and type of those who hated God and His people, promises that they and all nations should become the inheritance of the Church. Obadiah, on the same ground, having declared God's sentence on Edom, describes how each portion of the people of God should be enlarged and overspread beyond itself.

While thus alluding to the words of Amos, Obadiah further embodies an expression of Balaam, to which Amos also refers. Balaam says, *Edom shall be an heritage (yereshuh), Seir also shall be an heritage to his enemies; and Jacob shall do valiantly; and one out of Jacob shall have dominion, and shall destroy the remnant (sarid) out of the city.* The union of these two declarations of Balaam (one only of which had been employed by Amos) cannot be accidental. They lie in the two adjacent verses in each. *The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau stubble, and they shall burn them, and devour them; and there shall be no remnant (sarid) to the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it; and the south shall inherit (yereshu) the mount of Esau.* In the fourth verse, also, Obadiah has an idiom from the prophecy of Balaam, which occurs nowhere besides; *strong is thy dwelling, and place (vesim kinnecha) in the rock thy nest.*<sup>12</sup> This infinitive here is a very vivid but anomalous construction. It cannot be by accident, that this idiom occurs in these two places alone in the Hebrew Scriptures.

This employment of prophetic language of earlier prophets is the more remarkable, from the originality and freshness of Obadiah's own diction. In his 21 verses he has several words which occur nowhere else<sup>13</sup>. They are mostly simple words and inflections of words in use. Still they were probably framed by the Prophet himself. One, who himself adds to the store of words in a language, has no occasion to borrow them of another. Obadiah adopts that other prophetic language, not as needing it to express his own meaning, but in order to give to it a fresh force and bearing.

But on the same ground, on which Obadiah employs the language of prophets who lived before him, he would have used the words of later prophets, had he lived later.

The framing of single words or forms is the least part of the originality of Obadiah's style. Vividness, connectedness, power, are characteristics of it. As it begins, so it continues and ends. It has no breaks, nor interruptions. Thought follows on thought, as wave rolls upon wave, but all marshalled to one end, marching on, column after column,

to the goal which God hath appointed for them. Each verse grows out of that which was before it, and carries on its thought. The cadence of the words in the original is a singular blending of pathos and strength. The pathos of the cadence consists in a somewhat long sustained measure, in which the Prophet dwells on the one thought which he wishes to impress; the force, in the few brief words in which he sums up some sentence. That lengthened flow will have struck even an English reader; the conciseness can only be seen in Hebrew. Those 5 words, *how are Esau outsearched! out-sought his secret places!* have been already alluded to. Other such instances are, *Ein tebunah bo* with which v. 7. closes; *gam attah ceachad mehem*, "thou too as one of them," v. 11; *caasher 'asitha, ye'aseh lac* after the long exhortation in v. 12-14. or the 3 words *vehaiu celo haiu*, which close the description in v. 16, 17. or those three which so wonderfully sum up the whole prophecy, *vehayethah ladanai hammeluchah, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.* Even the repetition which occurs in the Prophet, adds to the same effect, as in the two brief words, *beyom nochro, beyom obdam, beyom zarah, beyom eida, beyom eido*, with which he closes each clause of the exhortation against malicious joy in the calamity of their brother. The characteristic, vivid detail in description, and, in the midst of it, great conciseness without sameness, occurs throughout Obadiah.

It would then be the more strange, that a prophecy so brief and so connected as that of Obadiah should have been severed into two (one part of which is to belong to some earlier prophet, the other is to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem), but that the motive of this disruption of the prophecy is apparent. "The oracle on Edom preserved under the name of Obadiah *can*," says one, "in its present form, be of no earlier date than the Babylonish Captivity. The destruction and entire desolation of Jerusalem is here described; the prophet himself wrote among the exiles." It cannot be of any earlier date, according to this writer, because, in his belief, there cannot be any certain prediction of details of the future, or any knowledge of that future, beyond those dim anticipations which man's own conscience and the survey of God's ordinary Providence may suggest; a *cannot*, which presupposes another *cannot*, that God cannot reveal Himself to His creatures.

But then this writer also could not altogether escape the impression, that great part of this prophecy must belong to a period long before the captivity. The only way

<sup>12</sup> Num. xxiv. 21, Ob. 4.

<sup>13</sup> פָּרַק, our "fork," where two ways part, v. 14, נִבְעֵן, v. 6, קָטַל v. 9, מוֹר v. 7, לָעַן v. 15, נִצְמֹנִין

searched out, v. 6, are words peculiar in this sense to Obadiah: חָנוּי סָלַל v. 3 occurs only in Cant. ii. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Ewald Proph. i. 388.

of reconciling these contradictions, this *must* of external evidence, and this *cannot* of anti-doctrinal prejudice, was to divide in twain this living whole, and to assign to the earlier period such portions relating to Edom, as contained no allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem. This then is done. "Further investigation," the writer proceeds, "shews, that the later prophet employed a fragment of an earlier prophet as to Edom. More than half of what is now extant, i. e. v. 1-10. half of v. 17. and v. 18. by their contents, language, and coloring, indicate very clearly such an earlier prophet; and moreover, about the same time Jeremiah employed the earlier fragment, in that very much out of verses 1-9. recurs in Jeremiah, but nothing of the words which belong most visibly to the later prophet, 11-16, 19-21."

i. Now, plainly, as Jeremiah is not here to tell us, why he did incorporate in his prophecy certain verses, and did not refer to certain other verses of Obadiah, it is, in the last degree, rash to make a positive inference from the mere fact of his not employing those verses, that he had them not to employ. He does embody in his prophecy the five first verses of Obadiah, and there the correspondence between the two Prophets almost ceases. The *thought* of ver. 6, but not one word of it recurs in Jeremiah<sup>2</sup>; to ver. 7. there is no allusion whatever; of ver. 8. again, the thought is retained, but only *one word*, and that, in a form altogether different<sup>3</sup>. This eighth verse is the last in Obadiah, to which Jeremiah refers. Ewald then has to manufacture his "earlier prophet" out of those five first verses, which Jeremiah does embody; of other two, of which the thought only recurs in Jeremiah; and five more<sup>4</sup>, to which there is, in Jeremiah, no allusion whatever; and having culled these ad libitum out of the whole chapter, he argues against the non-existence of the rest on the ground that Jeremiah does not employ them, whereas Jeremiah equally does not employ five of those, the existence of which at that same time Ewald acknowledges, and to two others Jeremiah alludes but very distantly. Since Jeremiah's not alluding to five of these verses, does not prove, according to Ewald, that they did not then exist, neither does his not employing the remainder prove it as to them.

ii. Jeremiah assigns no ground for the punishment of Edom, except his pride; nor does he, in any of those prophecies as to those lesser nations, foretell anything as to the future of Judah. This was not assigned to him, as his subject here. He does in the prophecies against Egypt and Babylon; for

those were the great dynasties, on whom, in human eyes, the existence of Judah depended. There he foretells, that God would make a *full end of all the nations whither He had driven them, but not of Jacob His servant*<sup>5</sup>. The future lot of Judah, as a whole, did not depend on those little nations. It may be on this ground, that Jeremiah foretells *their* destruction and the restoration of Moab and Ammon<sup>6</sup>, and is silent as to Judah. Again, the immediate punishment of all these petty nations through Nebuchadnezzar was the subject of Jeremiah's prophecy, not ulterior suffering at the hands of Judah. Now these subjects, the *violence of Esau against his brother Jacob*, as the ground of Edom's punishment<sup>7</sup>, the future enlargement of Jacob<sup>8</sup>, and an ulterior retribution on Edom<sup>9</sup> through Judah, occupy most of those verses of Obadiah, to which there is no allusion in Jeremiah. This accounts (if there were any need to account for it) for the absence of allusion to almost all of Obadiah to which Jeremiah does not allude, both as to the part which Ewald accounts for in his way, and as to most of that part which he leaves unaccounted for.

But altogether, it must be said, that God's Prophets employ freely, as God taught them, what they do employ of the former Prophets. They do not copy them in a mechanical way, as if they were simply re-writing a work which lay before them, so that we should have to account for anything which they did not think good to repeat. In making the like use of Isaiah's prophecy as to Moab, Jeremiah makes no reference to the five first verses.

iii. So far from "writing among the exiles," Obadiah implies that the Captivity had not yet commenced. He speaks of Judah and Benjamin, as in their own land, and foretells that they shall enlarge themselves on all sides. Hosea and Amos had, at that time, prophesied the final destruction of the *kingdom*<sup>10</sup> of Israel and the dispersion<sup>11</sup> of the ten tribes. In conformity with this, Obadiah foretells to the two tribes, that they should occupy the vacated places of the land of promise. In contrast with this enlargement of Judah and Benjamin, he speaks of those already in captivity, and prophesies their restoration. He speaks of two bodies of present exiles, "the captivity of this host of the children of Israel," "the captivity of Jerusalem which is at Sepharad." Of these he probably says<sup>12</sup>, *The captivity of this host of the children of Israel which are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the captivity of Jerusalem which is in Sepharad, shall possess*

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xlix. 10.  
<sup>3</sup> Shall I not destroy (האֶבְדֶּנָּה) the wise? Ob. 8; Is wisdom perished? אִכְלָה Jer. xlix. 7.

<sup>4</sup> 7-9, 10, 17, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. xlii. 27, 8; see also l. 4-8, 19, 20, 28, 33, 4, li. 5, 6, 10, 45.

<sup>6</sup> xliiii. 47, xlix. 6.

<sup>10</sup> 10-14. In 15, 16, Obadiah, having rehearsed the offence, repeats the sentence.

<sup>11</sup> 17-21.

<sup>12</sup> Hos. i. 4, Am. v. 27. ab. p. 201, vi. 7, ix. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Hos. ix. 17. ab. pp. 61, 2: Am. ix. 9.

<sup>8</sup> ver. 20.

<sup>9</sup> 18.



the cities of the South. Both these sets of captives must have been limited in number. Those of Jerusalem at Sepharad or Sardis\*, the capital of the Lydian empire, could only have been such as were exported by means of the slave trade. The only public settlement of Jews there, was in times long subsequent, about B. C. 200, when Antiochus the Great, in order to check the seditions in Lydia and Phrygia, "removed thither at much cost 2000 Jewish families out of Mesopotamia and Babylonia, with their goods," on account of their tried faithfulness and zealous service to his forefathers. This removal, accompanied with grants of land, exemption from tribute for ten years, personal and religious protection, was a continuation of the commenced dispersion; it was not a captivity. They were the descendants of those who might have returned to their country, if they would. They were in the enjoyment of all the temporal benefits, for which their forefathers had bartered their portion in their own land. There was nothing peculiar why they should be singled out as the objects of God's promise. Jews were then dispersing everywhere, to be the future disciples or persecutors of the Gospel in all lands. Seleucus Nicator, a century before, had found Jews in Asia and Lower Syria, and had given them like privileges with the Macedonians and Greeks whom he settled there. Jews had shared his wars. Alexander had, at Alexandria, bestowed like privileges on the Egyptian Jews<sup>2</sup>. In such times, then, there was no captivity at Sepharad; no Lydian empire; nothing to distinguish the Jews there, from any others who remained willingly expatriated.

On the other side, the place which the Prophet assigns to those captives on their return is but a portion of Judah, the cities of the South, which he does not represent as unpeopled. In like way, whether the words as to Israel are rendered, "which are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath," or, "shall possess the Canaanites as far as Zarephath," in either case the Prophet must be speaking of a very limited number. Had he been speaking in reference to the ten tribes or their restoration, he would not have assigned their territory, "Ephraim, Samaria, Gilead," to the two tribes, nor would he have assigned to them so small a tract. This limited number of captives exactly agrees with the state of things, supposing Obadiah to have lived,

when, according to his place in the Canon, he did live, near the time of Joel. For Joel denounces God's judgments on Tyre, Zidon and Philistia for selling unto the Grecians the children of Judah and Jerusalem. These captives, of whom Obadiah speaks, were some probably yet unsold, at Sarepta, and some at Sepharad or Sardis among the Grecians. On the other hand, it is inconceivable that Obadiah would have contrasted the present captivity, "this captivity of the children of Israel," "the captivity of Jerusalem which is in Sepharad," with Judah and Benjamin in their ancient possessions, had Judah and Benjamin been, when he wrote, themselves in captivity in Babylon, or that he would have prophesied concerning some little fragment of Israel, that it should be restored, and would have passed over the whole body of the ten tribes, if, when he prophesied, it had been in captivity. Nor is there again any likelihood, that by "this captivity of Jerusalem in Sepharad," Obadiah means any captives, among whom he himself was, (which is the whole ground-work of this theory of Ewald) for, in that case, he would probably have addressed the consolation and the promise of return to them (as do the other prophets) and not have spoken of them only.

A few years hence, and this theory will be among the things which have been. The connection of thought in Obadiah is too close, the characteristics of his style occur too uniformly throughout his brief prophecy, to admit of its being thus dislocated. Nowhere, throughout his prophecy, can one word or form be alleged, of which it can even be said, that it was used more frequently in later Hebrew. All is one original, uniform, united whole.

"Obadiah," says Hugh of S. Victor, "is simple in language, manifold in meaning; few in words, abundant in thoughts, according to that, 'the wise man is known by the fewness of his words.' He directeth his prophecy, according to the letter, against Edom; allegorically, he inveighs against the world; morally, against the flesh. Bearing an image of the Saviour, he hinteth at His Coming Through Whom the world is destroyed, through Whom the flesh is subdued, through Whom freedom is restored." "Among all the prophets," says another<sup>4</sup>, "he is the briefest in number of words; in the grace of mysteries he is their equal."

Greeks omitting the *v* or *ph*, and adding, according to their wont, their termination to the Asiatic name. S. Jerome's Hebrew instructor told him that it meant the "Bosphorus;" but this may have been his own conjecture, the letters "sphr" occurring in both; and if he took in the Prepos. *h*, he had "bsphr" as the ground of his conjecture, taking in the *h* which he ought not, and leaving out the *h* which he ought to have accounted for.

<sup>2</sup> Jos. Ant. xii. 3. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus (Ant. xii. 3. 1.) contrasts them with the *εὐνοεισμένοις*.

<sup>4</sup> Isid. lib. alleg. 8. Scr.

\* CPaRaD occurs three times in Cuneiform Inscriptions in a list of Asiatic nations after ARMIN between KaTaPaTUK (Cappadocia) and IaUNA (Ionia), Niebuhr Reiseb. T. ii. Tab. xxxi. l. 12. p. 152, in the Epitaph of Darius at Nakshii Rostam l. 28. before Ionia, in Col. 1 of the Inscription of Bisutun, l. 15." After it had been decyphered, De Sacy identified the CPRD of the Inscriptions with the "Sepharad" of Obadiah. (Burnouf, Mémoire sur deux Inscriptions Cuneiformes, 1836, p. 147.) Then Lassen (Hall. Encyclop. v. Persepolis, S. iii. Vol. 17. p. 36.) identified CRPD with SARDis, the

# OBADIAH.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

1 The destruction of Edom, 3  
for their pride, 10 and for  
their wrong unto Jacob. 17  
The salvation and victory of  
Jacob.

THE vision of Obadiah.  
Thus saith the Lord

VER. 1. *The vision of Obadiah*, i.e. of the worshiper of God. The Prophet would be known only by that which his name imports, that he worshipped God. He tells us in this double title, through whom the prophecy came, and from Whom it came. His name authenticated the prophecy to the Jewish Church. Thenceforth he chose to remain wholly hidden. He entitles it a *vision*, as the prophets were called *seers*<sup>1</sup>, although he relates, not the vision which he saw, but its substance and meaning. Probably the future was unfolded to him in the form of sights spread out before his mind, of which he spoke in words given to him by God. His language consists of a succession of pictures, which he may have seen, and, in his picture-language, described. "As prophecy is called *the word*, because God spake to the prophets within, so it is called *vision*, because the prophet saw, with the eyes of the mind and by the light wherewith they are illumined, what God willeth to be known to them." The name expresses also the certainty of their knowledge. "Among the organs of our senses, sight has the most evident knowledge of those things which are the object of our senses. Hence the contemplation of the things which are true is called *vision*, on account of the evidence and assured certainty. On that ground the prophet was called *seer*."

Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom. This second title states, that the whole which follows is from God. What immediately follows is said in Obadiah's own person; but all, whether so spoken or directly in the Person of God, was alike the word of God. God spake in or by the prophets, in both ways, since <sup>4</sup> *prophecy came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. Obadiah, in that he uses, in regard to his whole prophecy, words which other prophets use in delivering a direct message from God, ascribes the whole of his prophecy to God, as immediately as other prophets did any words which God commanded them to speak. The words are a rule for all prophecy, that all comes directly from God.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. ix. 9.  
<sup>2</sup> Comm. in Is. § 8. ap. S. Basil. i. 383.  
<sup>4</sup> 2 S. Pet. i. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Rib,  
<sup>5</sup> liii. 1.

God concerning Edom; Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

° We have heard a rumor  
from the LORD, and an  
ambassador is sent among  
the heathen, Arise ye, and  
let us rise up against her  
in battle.

Isa. 21. 11.  
& 34. 5.  
Ezek. 21.  
12. 13, 14.  
Joel 3. 19.  
Mal. 1. 3.  
Jer. 49. 14, &c.

We have heard a rumor, rather, a report; lit. a hearing, a thing heard, as Isaiah says<sup>5</sup>, *Who hath believed our report?* A report is certain or uncertain, according to the authority from whom it comes. This report was certainly true, since it was from the Lord. By the plural, *we*, Obadiah may have associated with himself, either other prophets of his own day as Joel and Amos, who, with those yet earlier, as Balaam and David, had prophesied against Edom, or the people, for whose sakes God made it known to him. In either case, the Prophet does not stand alone for himself. He hears with "the goodly company of the Prophets;" and the people of God hear in him, as Isaiah says again<sup>6</sup>, *that which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you*.

And an ambassador is sent among the heathen. The ambassador is any agent, visible or invisible, sent by God. Human powers, who wish to stir up war, send human messengers. All things stand at God's command, and whatever or whomsoever He employs, is a messenger from Him. He uses our language to us. He may have employed an angel, as He says<sup>7</sup>, *He sent evil angels among them, and as, through the permission given to a lying spirit*<sup>8</sup>, He executed His judgments on Ahab, of his own free will believing the evil spirit, and disbelieving Himself. So <sup>9</sup> *God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, allowing His rebellious spirit to bring about the punishment of evil men, by inflaming yet more the evil passions, of which they were slaves. Evil spirits, in their malice and rebellion, while stirring up the lust of conquest, are still God's messengers, in that He overrules them; as, to St. Paul<sup>10</sup>, the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, was still the gift of God. It was given me, he says.*

Arise ye and let us rise. He who rouseth them, says, *Arise ye*, and they quickly echo the words, and let us arise. The will of God is fulfilled at once. While eager to accomplish their own ends, they fulfill, the more, the purpose of God. Whether the first agent be man's own passions, or the evil spirit who

<sup>6</sup> xxi. 10.  
<sup>8</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 21-23.  
<sup>9</sup> Jud. ix. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 49.  
<sup>10</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

2 Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.

stirs them, the impulse spreads from the one or the few to the many. But all catch the spark, cast in among them. The summons finds a ready response. *Arise*, is the command of God, however given; *let us arise*, is the eager response of man's avarice or pride or ambition, fulfilling impetuously the secret will of God; as a tiger, let loose upon man by man, fulfills the will of its owner, while sating its own thirst for blood. So Isaiah hears <sup>1</sup> the noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people, a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together. The Medes and Persians thought at that time of nothing less, than that they were instruments of the One God, Whom they knew not. But Isaiah continues; *The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle*; and, when it was fulfilled, Cyrus saw and owned it <sup>2</sup>.

2. Behold, I have made thee small. God, having declared His future judgments on Edom, assigns the first ground of those judgments. Pride was the root of Edom's sin, then envy; then followed exultation at his brother's fall, hard-heartedness and bloodshed. All this was against the disposition of God's Providence for him. God had made him small, in numbers, in honor, in territory. Edom was a wild mountain people. It was strongly guarded in the rock-girt dwelling, which God had assigned it. Like the Swiss or the Tyrolese of old, or the inhabitants of Mount Caucasus now, it had strength for resistance through the advantages of its situation, not for aggression, unless it were that of a robber-horde. But lowness, as men use it, is the mother either of lowliness or pride. A low estate, acquiesced in by the grace of God, is the parent of lowliness; when rebelled against, it generates a greater intensity of pride than greatness, because that pride is against nature itself and God's appointment. The pride of human greatness, sinful as it is, is allied to a natural nobility of character. Copying pervertedly the greatness of God, the soul, when it receives the Spirit of God, casts off the slough, and

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

3 ¶ The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose

\*2 Kings 14. 7.

retains its nobility transfigured by grace. The conceit of littleness has the hideousness of those monstrous combinations, the more hideous, because unnatural, not a corruption only but a distortion of nature. Edom never attempted anything of moment by itself. *Thou art greatly despised*. Weakness, in itself, is neither despicable nor despised. It is despised only, when it vaunts itself to be, what it is not. God tells Edom what, amid its pride, it was in itself, *despicable*; what it would thereafter be, *despised* <sup>3</sup>.

3. The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee. Not the strength of its mountain-fastnesses, strong though they were, deceived Edom, but the pride of his heart. That strength was but the occasion which called forth the pride. Yet it was strong in its abode. God, as it were, admits it to them. *Dweller in the clefts of the rocks, the loftiness of his habitation*. "The whole Southern country of the Edomites," says S. Jerome, "from Eleutheropolis to Petra and Selah (which are the possessions of Esau), hath minute dwellings in caves; and on account of the oppressive heat of the sun, as being a southern province, hath underground cottages." Its inhabitants, whom Edom expelled <sup>4</sup>, were hence called Horites, i. e. dwellers in caves. Its chief city was called Selah or Petra, "rock." It was a city single of its kind amid the works of man. "The eagles placed their nests in the rocky caves at a height of several hundred feet above the level of the valley." "The power of the conception which would frame a range of mountain-rocks into a memorial of the human name, which, once of noble name and high bepraised, sought, through might of its own, to clothe itself with the imperishableness of the eternal Word, is here the same as in the contemporary monuments of the temple-rocks of Elephantine or at least those of the Egyptian Thebes." The ornamental buildings, so often admired by travelers, belong to a later date. Those nests in the rocks, piled over one another, meeting you in every recess, lining each fresh winding of the valleys, as each opened on the discoverer <sup>5</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Is. xiii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ezr. i. 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> [ ] is at once a passive participle and an adjective.

<sup>4</sup> habitatiunculæ.

<sup>5</sup> Deut. ii. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Schubert, Reise, ii. 428. ed. 2.

<sup>7</sup> "The most striking feature of the place consists, not in the fact that there are occasional excavations and sculptures, like those above described, but in the innumerable multitude of such excavations along the whole coast of perpendicular rocks, adjacent to the main area, and in all the lateral

valleys and chasms." Rob. ii. 139. "What remains are the mere débris of what the precipices once presented to view.—Many of the excavations are so difficult to reach and some are such mere wall or surface, that it appears as if the whole front of the rock, to a considerable depth, had fallen. The conduits, cisterns, flights of steps scattered over the rocks and among the precipices, indicate a larger number of rock-dwellings than remain now, very great as that number is.—As he pointed up two or three ravines, counting the holes in a single

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

habitation is high; <sup>4</sup> that  
saith in his heart, Who

<sup>4</sup> Isai. 14, 15, 16. Rev. 18. 7.

often at heights, where (now that the face of the rock and its approach, probably hewn in it, have crumbled away<sup>1</sup>) you can scarcely imagine how human foot ever climbed<sup>2</sup>, must have been the work of the first hardy mountaineers, whose feet were like the chamois. Such habitations imply, not an uncivilized, only a hardy, active, people. In those narrow valleys, so scorched by a southern sun, they were at once the coolest summer dwellings, and, amid the dearth of fire-wood, the warmest in winter. The dwellings of the living and the sepulchres of the dead were, apparently, hewn out in the same soft red sandstone-rock, and perhaps some of the dwellings of the earlier rock-dwellers were converted into graves by the Nabataeans and their successors who lived in the valley. The central space has traces of other human habitations. "The ground is covered with heaps of hewn stones, foundations of buildings and vestiges of paved streets, all clearly indicating that a large city once existed here." "They occupy two miles in circumference, affording room in an oriental city for 30, or 40,000 inhabitants." Its theatre held "above 3000." Probably this city belonged

rock-face, and reminded me, how small a proportion these bore to the whole, I was indeed astonished." Miss Mart. *Eastern Life*, iii. 2, 3. "I do not doubt that by calculation of all in the outlying ravines, you might count up thousands, but in the most populous part that I could select, I could not number in one view more than fifty, and generally much fewer. It is these immense ramifications, rather than their concentrated effect, that is remarkable; and this, of course, can no more be seen in one view, than all the streets of London." Stanley, 88.

<sup>1</sup> Martin. *ib.* note 5. She speaks also of "short and odd staircases, twisting hither and thither among the rocks," iii. 12. "little flights of steps scattered over the slopes." ii. 319. "Wherever your eyes turn along the excavated sides of the rocks, you see steps often leading to nothing, or to something which has crumbled away; often with their first steps worn away, so that they are now inaccessible," Stanley, 91. "the thousand excavations" beyond, *ib.* 90. "There [in the Sik] they are most numerous, the rock is honey-combed with cavities of all shapes and sizes." *ib.* 91.

<sup>2</sup> "Had then the ancient builders of these rock-wings like the eagle, with which they raised themselves to those perpendicular precipices?" "Who now even with the feet of the chamois, could climb after them?" V. Schubert, ii. 420. Miss Martineau uses the same image of wings, *Eastern Life*, ii. 320, iii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Burckhardt, *Syr.* p. 427. "On the left side of the river," he adds, "is a rising ground extending westward for nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an hour, entirely covered with similar remains. In the right bank, where the ground is more elevated, ruins of the same description are also seen."

<sup>4</sup> Robins. ii. 136.

<sup>5</sup> 3000. Burckhardt, *ib.* "more than 3000." Rob. ii. 134.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley, 87. "Petra itself is entirely shut out by the intervening rocks.—The great feature of the

shall bring me down to the  
ground?

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

altogether to the later, Nabataean, Roman, or Christian times. Its existence illustrates the extent of the ancient city of the rock. The whole space, rocks and valleys, imbedded in the mountains which girt it in, lay invisible even from the summit of Mount Hor<sup>4</sup>. So nestled was it in its rocks, that an enemy could only know of its existence, an army could only approach it, through treachery. Two known approaches<sup>5</sup> only, from E. and W., enter into it. The least remarkable is described as lying amid "wild fantastic mountains," "rocks in towering masses," "over steep and slippery passes," or "winding in recesses below." Six<sup>6</sup> hours of such passes led to the Western side of Petra. The Greeks spoke of it as two days' journey from their "world"<sup>10</sup>. Approach how you would, the road lay through defiles<sup>11</sup>. The Greeks knew but of "one ascent to it, and that," (as they deemed) "made by hand;" [that from the E.] The Mohammedans now think the Sik or chasm, the two miles of ravine by which it is approached, supernatural, made by the rod of Moses when he struck the rock<sup>12</sup>. Demetrius, "the Besieger"<sup>14</sup>, at the head of 8000 men, (the 4000 infantry selected

mountains of Edom is the mass of red bald-headed sandstone rocks, intersected, not by valleys but by deep seams. In the heart of these rocks, itself invisible, lies Petra." See Woodcut.

<sup>7</sup> In regard to the brook of Wadi Musa, Robinson says, "no one could tell in what direction the waters, when swollen, find their way through the cliffs." This only is certain that the Wady does not, as Wady Musa, extend down to the Arabah." ii. 137. Dr. Wilson (1847) says, "the water found a subterranean exit by the passage through the rocks on the W. side of the valley, through which they now flow." Lands, &c. i. 306. Any way, it was a passage impassable by man.

<sup>8</sup> Martineau, ii. 317, 8. She continues, "A little further on we stopped in a hollow of the hills.—Our path, our very narrow path, lay over these whitish hills, now up, now down, and then and then again we were slipping and jerking down slopes of gaudy rock. For nearly an hour longer we were descending the pass, down we went and still down, at length we came upon the platform above the bed of the torrent; near which stands the only edifice in Petra." *ib.* 319, 20.

<sup>9</sup> *ib.* ii. 316-19.

<sup>10</sup> <sup>79</sup> *circumsp.* "The place was strong in the extreme, but unvalled, and two days journey, &c." *Diod. Sic.* xix. 95.

<sup>11</sup> See the accounts in Burckhardt, *Syria*, 421. Laborde, c. 8-10. Eng. Tr. Lindsay, pp. 220-30. Irby and M. c. 8. Rob. ii. 107. Stanley, 87, 98.

<sup>12</sup> *Diod. Sic.* xix. 97. "The corrosion of the surface of the rock by time and weather has so much the appearance of architectural intention, that it is at first difficult in Petra itself to distinguish the worn from the chiselled face of the precipices." Mart. ii. 317. "One striking feature of the whole scenery is, that not merely the excavations and buildings, but the rocks themselves are in a constant state of mouldering decay. You can scarcely tell where excavation begins or decay ends." Stanley, 88.

<sup>13</sup> Stanley, 89.

<sup>14</sup> Poliorcetes.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 687.

4 \*Though thou exalt

thyself as the eagle, and  
\* Job 21. 6.  
Jer. 49. 16. though thou 'set thy nest  
& 51. 53. Amos 9. 2. † Hab. 2. 9.

for their swiftness of foot from the whole army<sup>1</sup>) made repeated assaults on the place, but "those within had an easy victory from its commanding height." "A few hundred men might defend the entrance against a large army." Its width is described as from 10 to 30 feet<sup>2</sup>, "a rent in a mountain-wall, a magnificent gorge, a mile and a half long, winding like the most flexible of rivers, between rocks almost precipitous, but that they overlap and crumble and crack, as if they would crush over you. The blue sky only just visible above. The valley opens, but contracts again. Then it is honey-combed with cavities of all shapes and sizes. Closing once more, it opens in the area of Petra itself, the torrent-bed passing now through absolute desolation and silence, though strewn with the fragments which shew that you once entered on a splendid and busy city, gathered along in the rocky banks, as along the quays of some great Northern river." Beyond this immediate rampart of rocks, there lay between it and the Eastern Empires that vast plateau, almost unapproachable by an enemy who knew not its hidden artificial reservoirs of waters. But even the entrance gained, what gain beside, unless the people and its wealth were betrayed to a surprise? Striking as the rock-girt Petra was, a gem in its mountain-setting, far more marvelous was it, when, as in the Prophet's time, the rock itself was Petra. Inside the defile, an invader would be outside the city yet. He might himself become the besieged, rather than the besieger. In which of these cryies along all those ravines were the eagles to be found? From which of those lairs might not Edom's lion-sons burst out upon them? Multitudes gave the invaders no advantage in scaling those mountain-sides, where, observed themselves by an unseen enemy, they would at last have to fight man to man. What a bivouac were it, in that narrow spot, themselves encircled by an enemy everywhere, anywhere, and visibly nowhere, among those thousand caves, each larger cave, may be, an ambush! In man's sight Edom's boast was well-founded; but what before God?

That saith in his heart. The heart has its

<sup>1</sup> Diod. Ib. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Schubert, Reisa, ii. 428. ed. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Burckhardt, 434. "The footing is extremely bad, and the passage so completely commanded from the sides, and so obstructed by huge masses of sandstone that had rolled down from above, that it was obvious a very small force would be capable of holding it against a great superiority of numbers." Captains Irby and M. c. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Mart. iii. 11. "The width is not more than just

among the stars, thence  
will I bring thee down,  
saith the LORD.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

own language, as distinct and as definite as that formed by the lips, mostly deeper, often truer. It needeth not the language of the lips, to offend God. As He answers the heart which seeks Him, so also He replies in displeasure to the heart which despises Him. *Who shall bring me down to the earth?* Such is the language of all self-sufficient security. "Can Alexander fly?" answered the Bactrian chief from another Petra. On the second night he was prisoner or slain<sup>6</sup>. Edom probably, under his Who? included God Himself, Who to him was the God of the Jews only. Yet men now too include God in their defiance, and scarcely veil it from themselves by speaking of "fortune" rather than God; or, if of a coarser sort, they do not even veil it, as in that common terrible saying, "He fears neither God nor devil." God answers his thought;

4. *Though thou exalt thyself* [or, thy nest] *like the eagle*. The eagle builds its nest in places well-nigh inaccessible to man. The Edomites were a race of eagles<sup>7</sup>. It is not the language of poetry or exaggeration; but is poetic, because so true. *And though thou set thy nest in the stars*. 'This is men's language, strange as it is. "I shall touch the stars with my crown;" "I shall strike the stars with my lofty crown;" "since I have touched heaven with my lance." As Job says<sup>8</sup>, *Though his excellency mount up to the heavens and his head reacheth unto the clouds, yet he shall perish forever, like his own dung*. And Isaiah to the king of Babylon, the type of Anti-Christ and of the Evil one<sup>10</sup>, *Thou hast said in thy heart, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; thy pomp is brought down to the grave, the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee*. "The heathen saw this. *Aesop*, when asked, what doeth God? said, 'He humbles the proud and exalts the humble.' And another<sup>12</sup>, 'Whom morning's dawn beholdeth proud, The setting sun beholdeth bowed.'"

<sup>13</sup> They who boast of being Christians, and are on that ground self-satisfied, promising themselves eternal life, and thinking that they need not fear Hell, because they are Christians and hold the faith of the Apostles, while their lives are altogether alien from

sufficient for the passage of two horsemen abreast, the sides are in all parts perpendicular." I. & M. p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley, 89-91.

<sup>6</sup> Q. Curt. vii. 41. 2. L. Arr. iv. 18. 19.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 235.

<sup>8</sup> Ovid, Horace, Lysimachus in Plutarch de fort. Alex. L. II. Lap.

<sup>9</sup> xx. 6. 7.

<sup>10</sup> xiv. 13. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Lap.

<sup>12</sup> Sen. Herc. fur. Ib.

<sup>13</sup> Rib.

Before  
C H R I S T  
cir. 587.

\* Jer. 49. 9.

5 If <sup>a</sup>thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grape-gatherers came

to thee, <sup>b</sup>would they not leave || some grapes?

Before  
C H R I S T  
cir. 587.

6 How are the things of <sup>a</sup>Esau searched out! how are his hidden things <sup>b</sup>sought up!

Dent. 24. 21.

Is. 17. 6.

& 24. 13.

Or, gleanings †

Christianity, are such Edomites, priding themselves because they dwell in clefts of the rocks. For it sufficeth not to believe what Christ and the Apostles taught, unless thou do what they commanded.—These spiritual Edomites, from a certain love or some fear of future torments, are moved by grief for sin, and give themselves to repentance, fastings, almsgiving, which is no other than to enter the clefts of the rocks; because they imitate the works of Christ and the holy Apostles who are called rocks, like those to whom John said <sup>1</sup>, *O ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* But, since they have no humility, they become thereby the more inflated with pride, and the more of such works they do, the more pleasures they allow themselves, and become daily the prouder and the wickeder. *The pride then of their heart deceiveth them, because they seem in many things to follow the deeds of the holy, and they fear no enemies, as though they dwelt in clefts of the rocks. They exalt their throne, in that, through the shadow of lofty deeds, they seem to have many below them, mount as high as they can, and place themselves, where they think they need fear no peril. But to them the Lord saith, Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle,—thence will I bring thee down.* For, however exalted they be, and however they seem good and great, they are brought down to the ground and out from the caverns of the rocks, wherein they deemed that they dwelt securely, in that they lapse into overt shameful sin; whence all perceive, what they were then too, when they were thought to be righteous. And striking is it, that they are compared to eagles. For although the eagle fly aloft, yet thence it looks to the earth and the carcases and animals which it would devour, as Job writes of it <sup>2</sup>, *She dwelleth and abideth upon the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey; her eyes behold afar off; her young ones also suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is she.* So these, while they pretend perfection, never turn their eyes away from earthly goods, always casting them on honors, or wealth, or pleasure, without which they count life to be no life. Well too is it called their nest. For, toil how they may, in seeking an assured,

restful, security of life, yet what they build, is a nest made of hay and stubble, constructed with great toil, but lightly destroyed. This security of rest they lose, when they are permitted, by the just judgment of God, to fall into uncleanness, ambition or foulest sins, and are deprived of the glory which they unjustly gained, and *their folly becomes manifest to all.* Of such, among the Apostles, was the traitor Judas.—But the rich too and the mighty of this world, although they think that their possessions and what, with great toil, they have gained, when they have raised themselves above others, are most firm, it is but that nest which they have placed among the stars, soon to be dissipated by wind and rain.<sup>3</sup>

5. *If thieves came to thee.* The Prophet describes their future punishment, by contrast with that which, as a marauding people, they well knew. Thieves and robbers spoil only for their petty end. They take what comes to hand; what they can, they carry off. Shortness of time, difficulty of transport, necessity of providing for a retreat, limit their plunder. When they have gorged themselves, they depart. *Their plunder is limited. The grape-gatherer leaves gleanings.* God promises to His own people, under the same image, that they should have a remnant left <sup>4</sup>. *Gleaning grapes shall be left in it.* It shall be, as *gleaning grapes, when the vintage is done.* The Prophet anticipates the contrast by a burst of sympathy. In the name of God, he mourns over the destruction which he fore-announces. He laments over the destruction, even of the deadly enemy of his people. *How art thou destroyed!* So the men of God are wont to express their amazement at the greatness of the destruction of the ungodly. <sup>5</sup> *How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!* <sup>6</sup> *How hath the oppressor ceased!* <sup>7</sup> *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer son of the morning!* <sup>8</sup> *How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken!* <sup>9</sup> *How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!* <sup>10</sup> *How is Sheshach taken!* <sup>11</sup> *How is the praise of the whole earth surprised.*

6. *How are the things of Esau searched out!* lit. *How are Esau outsearched!* i. e. Esau, as a whole and in all its parts and in all its belongings, all its people and all its property,

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. iii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Job xxxix. 28-30.

<sup>3</sup> Is. xvii. 6, xxiv. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. lxxliii. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. l. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Is. xiv. 4, 12.

<sup>7</sup> Ib. li. 41.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

7 All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: † the men that were at

† Heb. the men of thy peace.  
Jer. 38. 22.

peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; † they that eat thy bread have laid a

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

† Heb. the men thy bread.

one and all. The name *Esau* speaks of them as a whole; the plural verb, *are outsearched*, represents all its parts. The word signifies a diligent search and tracking out, as in *Zephaniah*<sup>1</sup>, *I will search out Jerusalem with candles*, as a man holdeth a light in every dark corner, in seeking diligently some small thing which has been lost. *The hidden things*, i. e. his hidden treasures, *are sought up*. The enemy who should come upon him, should make no passing foray, but should abide there, seeking out of their holes in the rocks, themselves and their treasures. Petra, through its rocky ramparts, was well suited, as Nineveh in the huge circuit of its massive walls was well built, to be the receptacle of rapine. And now it was gathered, as all rapine is, first or last, for the spoiler. It was safe stored up there, to be had for the seeking. No exit, no way of escape. Edom, lately so full of malicious energy, so proud, should lie at the proud foot of its conqueror, as passive as the sheep in this large shamble, or as the inanimate boards which they had laid up and which were now tracked out. Soon after Obadiah's prophecy, Judah, under Ahaz, lost again to Syria, Elath<sup>2</sup>, which it had now under Uzziah recovered<sup>3</sup>. The Jews were replaced, it is uncertain whether by Edomites or by some tribe of Syrians<sup>4</sup>. If Syrians they were then friendly; if Edomites, Elath itself must, on the proximate captivity of Syria, have become the absolute possession of Edom. Either way, commerce again poured its wealth into Edom. To what end? to be possessed and to aggrandize Edom, thought her wealthy and her wise men; to be searched out and plundered, said the word of God. And it was so.

7. All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border. Destruction is more bitter, when friends aid in it. Edom had all along with unnatural hatred persecuted his brother, Jacob. So, in God's just judgment, its friends should be among its destroyers. Those confederates were probably Moab and Ammon, Tyre and Zidon, with whom they united to resist Nebuchadnezzar<sup>5</sup>, and seduced Zedekiah to rebel, although Moab, Ammon, and Edom turned against him<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings xiv. 6.

<sup>3</sup> 1b. xiv. 22.

<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew text has אֲרָמִים, which the E. V. renders Syrians, but which is not the plural of אֲרָם. The Kri corrects אֲרָמִים, which would indeed be the plural of אֲרָם, but which is nowhere used for Edomites. It might have the meaning, however, that single "Edomites" (not, "the children of Edom" nationally) settled there. The Kri is, however, but a conjectural correction; the reading of

These then, he says, sent them to the border. "So will they take the adversary's part, that, with him, they will drive thee forth from the borders, thrusting thee into captivity, to gain favor with the enemy." This they would do, he adds, through mingled treachery and violence. *The men of thy peace have deceived, have prevailed against thee*. As Edom turned peace with Judah into war, so those at peace with Edom should use deceit and violence against them, being admitted, perhaps, as allies within their borders, and then betraying the secret of their fastnesses to the enemy, as the Thesalians dealt toward the Greeks at Thermopylae. It was to be no common deceit, no mere failure to help them. *The men of thy bread have laid a wound* (better, a snare<sup>7</sup>) *under thee*. Perhaps Obadiah thought of David's words<sup>8</sup>, *mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me*. As they had done, so should it be done to them. *They that take the sword*, our Lord says<sup>9</sup>, *shall perish by the sword*; so they who shew bad faith, are the objects of bad faith, as Isaiah says<sup>10</sup>. The proverb which says, "there is honor among thieves," attests how limited such mutual faith is. It lasts, while it seems useful. Obadiah's description relates to one and the same class, the allies of Edom; but it heightens as it goes on; not confederates only, but those confederates, friends; not friends only, but friends indebted to them, familiar friends; those joined to them through that tie, so respected in the East, in that they had eaten of their bread. Those banded with them should, with signs of friendship, conduct them to their border, in order to expel them; those at peace should prevail against them in war; those who ate their bread should requite them with a snare.

There is none understanding in him. The brief words comprise both cause and effect. Had Edom not been without understanding, he had not been thus betrayed; and when betrayed in his security, he was as one stupefied. Pride and self-confidence betray man to his fall; when he is fallen, self-confidence betrayed passes readily into despair. In the sudden shock, the mind collapses. Men do

the text has, in its favor, the general presumption everywhere in favor of the textual and harder reading. The LXX and Vulg. render "Edomites."

<sup>5</sup> Jer. xxvii. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Zeph. ii. 8, Ezek. xxv.

<sup>7</sup> Theod.

<sup>8</sup> פֶּלֶא מִן הַיָּם (a softer form probably of פֶּלֶא in a like meaning).

<sup>9</sup> Ps. xli. 9.

<sup>10</sup> S. Matt. xxvi. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Is. xxxiii. 1. See ab. p. 182.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

wound under thee: \* *there*  
*is none understanding* || in  
him.

\*Is. 19. 11, 12.  
| Or. of 12.  
| Job 5. 12, 13.  
| Is. 29. 14.  
| Jer. 49. 7.

8 'Shall I not in that  
day, saith the LORD, even  
destroy the wise men out

of Edom, and understand-  
ing out of the mount of  
Esau?

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

9 And thy mighty  
men, O Teman, shall be  
dismayed, to the end that

= Ps. 78. 5.  
Amos 2. 16.  
= Jer. 49. 7.

not use the resources which they yet have, because what they had overvalued, fails them. Undue confidence is the parent of undue fear. The Jewish historian relates, how, in the last dreadful siege, when the outer wall began to give way, "fear fell on the tyrants, more vehement than the occasion called for. For, before the enemy had mounted, they were paralyzed, and ready to flee. You might see men, aforetime stouthearted and insolent in their impiety, crouching and trembling, so that, wicked as they were, the change was pitiable in the extreme.—Here especially one might learn the power of God upon the ungodly. For the tyrants bared themselves of all security, and, of their own accord, came down from the towers, where no force, but famine alone, could have taken them: For those three towers were stronger than any engines."

8. *Shall I not in that day even destroy the wise out of Edom?* It was then no common, no recoverable, loss of wisdom; for God, the Author of wisdom, had destroyed it. The heathen had a proverb, "whom God willeth to destroy, he first dements." So Isaiah foretells of Judah<sup>1</sup>, *The wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid.* Edom was celebrated of old for its wisdom. Eliphaz, the chief of Job's friends, the representative of human wisdom, was a Temanite<sup>2</sup>. A vestige of the name of the Shulites, whence came another of his friends, probably still lingers among the mountains of Edom<sup>3</sup>. Edom is doubtless included among the *sons of the East*<sup>4</sup>, whose wisdom is set as a counterpart to that of Egypt, the highest human wisdom of that period, by which that of Solomon would be measured. *Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East country and all the wisdom of Egypt.* In Baruch, they are still mentioned among the chief types of human wisdom. *"It (wisdom) hath not been heard of in Chanaan, neither hath it been seen in Theman. The Agarenes that seek wisdom upon earth, the merchants of Meran and of Theman, the authors of fables and searchers-out of understanding, none of these have known the way of wisdom, or remember her paths.* Whence Jeremiah<sup>5</sup>, in using these words of Obadiah, says, *Is wisdom no*

*more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?* He speaks, as though Edom were a known abode of human wisdom, so that it was strange that it was found there no more. He speaks of the Edomites as prudent, discriminating<sup>6</sup>, full of judgment, and wonders that counsel should have perished from them. They had it eminently then, before it perished. They thought themselves wise; they were thought so; but God took it away at their utmost need. So He says of Egypt, *"I will destroy the counsel thereof. The counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish. How say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? Where are they? who are thy wise? and let them tell thee now, and let them know, what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.* And of Judah, *"I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place.* The men of the world think that they hold their wisdom and all God's natural gifts, independently of the Giver. God, by the events of His natural Providence, as here by His word, shews, through some sudden withdrawal of their wisdom, that it is His, not theirs. Men wonder at the sudden failure, the flaw in the well-arranged plan, the one over-confident act which ruins the whole scheme, the over-shrewdness which betrays itself, or the unaccountable oversight. They are amazed that one so shrewd should overlook this or that, and think not that He, in Whose Hands are our powers of thought, supplied not just that insight, whereon the whole depended.

9. *And thy mighty, O Teman, shall be dismayed.* The heathen, more religiously than we, ascribed panic to the immediate action of one of their gods, or to Nature deified, Pan, i. e. the Universe: wrong as to the being whom they ignorantly worshipped; right, in ascribing it to what they thought a Divine agency. Holy Scripture at times discovers the hidden agency, that we may acknowledge God's Hand in those terrors which we cannot account for. So it relates, on occasion of Jonathan's slaughter of the Philistine garrison, *"there was a trembling in the host and in the field, and among all the people: the garrison and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth*

<sup>1</sup> Jos. B. J. vi. 8. 4.    <sup>2</sup> xxix. 14.    <sup>3</sup> Job iv. 1.  
<sup>4</sup> "Sihhan, a ruined place in the S. mountains of the Ghoeyr." Burckh. Syr. p. 414.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings iv. 30.    <sup>6</sup> Bar. iii. 22. 3.    <sup>7</sup> xlix. 7.  
<sup>8</sup> יִנְיָ.    <sup>9</sup> Is. xix. 3, 11, 12.  
<sup>10</sup> Jer. xix. 7.    <sup>11</sup> 1 Sam. xiv. 15.



Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

\* Gen. 27. 41.  
Ps. 137. 7.  
Ezek. 25. 12.  
& 33. 5.  
Amos 1. 11.

every one of the mount of  
Esau may be cut off by  
slaughter.

10 ¶ For thy<sup>e</sup> violence  
against thy brother Jacob

shame shall cover thee,  
and<sup>p</sup> thou shalt be cut off  
for ever.

11 In the day that thou  
stoodest on the other side,

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

\* Ezek. 25. 9.  
Mal. 1. 4.

quaked, so it became a trembling from God, or (in our common word,) a panic from God. All then failed Edom. Their allies and friends betrayed them; God took away their wisdom. Wisdom was turned into witlessness, and courage into cowardice; to the end that every one from mount Esau may be cut off by slaughter. The Prophet sums up briefly God's end in all this. The immediate means were man's treachery, man's violence, the failure of wisdom in the wise, and of courage in the brave. The end of all, in God's Will, was their destruction. <sup>1</sup> All things work together to good to those who love God, and to evil to those who hate Him.

By slaughter, lit. from slaughter, may mean either the immediate or the distant cause of their being cut off, either the means which God employed<sup>2</sup>, that Edom was cut off by one great slaughter by the enemy; or that which moved God to give them over to destruction, their own slaughter of their brethren, the Jews, as it follows;

10. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob. To Israel God had commanded<sup>3</sup>, *Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother.—The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation.* Edom did the contrary to all this. Violence includes all sorts of ill-treatment, from one with whom "might is right," because it is in the power of their hand<sup>4</sup> to do it. This they had done to the descendants of their brother, and him, their twin-brother, Jacob. They helped the Chaldeans in his overthrow, rejoiced in his calamity, thought that, by this co-operation, they had secured themselves. What, when from those same Chaldeans, those same calamities, which they had aided to inflict on their brother, came on themselves, when, as they had betrayed him, they were themselves betrayed; as they had exulted in his overthrow, so their allies exulted in their's! The shame of which the Prophet spake, is not the healthful distress at the evil of sin, but at its evils and disappointments. Shame at the evil which sin is, works repentance and turns aside the anger of God. Shame at the evils which sin brings, in itself leads to further sins, and endless, fruitless, shame. Edom had laid his plans, had succeeded; the wheel, in God's Providence, turned round and he was crushed.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> as in Gen. ix. 11, *all flesh shall no more be cut off by כִּי־תִכָּרֵת the waters of the flood.*

So Hosea said<sup>5</sup>, *they shall be ashamed through their own counsels; and Jeremiah<sup>6</sup>, we lie down in our shame and our confusion covereth us; and David<sup>7</sup>, let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle.* As one, covered and involved in a cloak, can find no way to emerge; as one, whom the waters cover<sup>8</sup>, is buried under them inextricably, so, wherever they went, whatever they did, shame covered them. So the lost shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt<sup>9</sup>.

*Thou shalt be cut off for ever.* One word expressed the sin, violence; four words, over against it, express the sentence; shame encompassing, everlasting excision. God's sentences are not completed at once in this life. The branches are lopped off; the tree decays; the axe is laid to the root; at last it is cut down. As the sentence on Adam, in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, was fulfilled, although Adam did not die, until he had completed 930 years<sup>10</sup>, so was this on Edom, although fulfilled in stages and by degrees. Adam bore the sentence of death about him. The 930 years wore out at last that frame, which, but for sin, had been immortal. So Edom received this sentence of excision, which was, on his final impenitence, completed, although centuries witnessed the first earnest only of its execution. Judah and Edom stood over against each other, Edom ever bent on the extirpation of Judah. At that first destruction of Jerusalem, Edom triumphed, *Raze her, raze her, even to the ground.* Yet, though it tarried long, the sentence was fulfilled. Judah, the banished, survived; Edom, the triumphant, was, in God's time and after repeated trials, cut off for ever. Do we marvel at the slowness of God's sentence? Rather marvel we, with wondering thankfulness, that His sentences, on nations or individuals, are slow, yet stand we in awe, because, if unrepented, they are sure. Centuries, to Edom, abated not their force or certainty; length of life changes not the sinner's doom.

11. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side. The time when they so stood, is not defined in itself, as a past or future. It is literally; *In the day of thy standing over against, i. e. to gaze on the calamities of God's people; in the day of strangers carrying away*

<sup>5</sup> Deut. xxiii. 7, 8. [8, 9 Heb.]

<sup>6</sup> x. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Mic. ii. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ps. cix. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Dan. xii. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Gen. v. 6.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

Or, *carried away his substance.*

\* Joel. 3. 3.

\* Nah. 3. 10.

Or, *do not behold, &c.*

\* Ps. 22. 17.

& 54. 7.

& 59. 10.

Mic. 4. 11.

& 7. 10.

\* Ps. 37. 13.

& 137. 7.

\* Job 31. 29.

Prov. 17. 5.

& 24. 17. 18.

Mic. 7. 8.

in the day that the strangers || carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and <sup>a</sup> cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.

12 But || thou shouldest not have <sup>a</sup> looked on <sup>a</sup> the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have <sup>a</sup> rejoiced over the children of Judah in

the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have <sup>a</sup> spoken proudly in the day of distress.

13 Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid *hands* on their || substance in the day of their calamity.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

† Heb. *magnified thy mouth.*

† Or, *forces.*

his strength, i. e. the strength of thy brother Jacob, of whom he had just spoken, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots on Jerusalem, thou too as one of them. One of them they were not. Edom was no stranger, no alien, no part of the invading army; he whose strength they carried away, was, he had just said, his brother Jacob. Edom burst the bonds of nature, to become what he was not, as one of them. He purposely does not say, *thou too wast* (*hayitha*) *as of them*; as he would have said, had he wished to express what was past. Obadiah seeing, in prophetic vision, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the share which the Edomites took thereat, describes it as it is before his eyes, as past. We see before us, the enemy carrying off all in which the human strength of Judah lay, his forces and his substance, and casting lots on Jerusalem, its people and its possessions. He describes it as past, yet not more so, than the visitation itself which was to follow, some centuries afterward. Of both, he speaks alike as past; of both, as future. He speaks of them as past, as being so beheld in His mind in Whose Name he speaks. God's certain knowledge does not interfere with our free agency. "God compelleth no one to sin; yet foreseeeth all who shall sin of their own will. How then should He not justly avenge what, foreknowing, He does not compel them to do? For as no one, by his memory, compelleth to be done things which pass, so God, by His foreknowledge, doth not compel to be done things which will be. And as man remembereth some things which he hath done, and yet hath not done all which he remembereth; so God foreknoweth all things

whereof He is Himself the Author, and yet is not Himself the Author of all which He foreknoweth. Of those things then, of which He is no evil Author, He is the just Avenger.

12-14. But thou shouldest not, rather it means, and can only mean <sup>2</sup>, (as in the E. M.) *And look not* (i. e. gaze not with pleasure <sup>3</sup>) *on the day of thy brother in the day of his becoming a stranger* <sup>4</sup>; and rejoice not over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; and enlarge not thy mouth in the day of distress. Enter not into the gate of My people in the day of their calamity; look not, thou too, on his affliction in the day of his calamity; and lay not hands on his substance in the day of his calamity; And stand not on the crossway, to cut off his fugitives; and shut not up his remnants in the day of distress. Throughout these three verses, Obadiah uses the future only. It is the voice of earnest, emphatic, dehortation and entreaty, not to do what would displease God, and what, if done, would be punished. He deports them from malicious rejoicing at their brother's fall, first in look, then in word, then in act, in covetous participation of the spoil, and lastly in murder. Malicious gazing on human calamity, forgetful of man's common origin and common liability to ill, is the worst form of human hate. It was one of the contumelies of the Cross, *they gaze, they look with joy upon Me* <sup>5</sup>. The rejoicing over them was doubtless, as among savages, accompanied with grimaces <sup>6</sup>. Then follow words of insult. The enlarging the mouth is uttering a tide of large words, here against the people of God; in Ezekiel, against Himself: *Thus with your mouth ye have en-*

<sup>1</sup> S. Aug. de lib. arb. iii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Introd. to Obad. p. 228. <sup>3</sup> as in Mic. vii. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Others, of his strange unheard of calamity. Others of his being rejected as a stranger by God, as 1 Sam. xxiii. 7; estranged as Jer. xix. 4. Either of

these meanings suits the word נָבַח Job xxxi. 3, rejection, reprobation, or, as ours, strange calamity. Anyhow it is not mere calamity, as neither is it in Arabic.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. xxii. 17.

<sup>6</sup> as in Ps. xxxv. 19, xxxviii. 16. <sup>7</sup> Ez. xxxv. 13.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 687.

14 Neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldst thou have || delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.

1 Or, shut up,  
Ps. 31. 8.

*larged against Me and have multiplied, your words against Me. I have heard. Thereon follows Edom's coming yet closer, entering the gate of God's people to share the conqueror's triumphant gaze on his calamity. Then, the violent, busy, laying the hands on the spoil, while others of them stood in cold blood, taking the fork where the ways parted, in order to intercept the fugitives before they were dispersed, or to shut them up with the enemy, driving them back on their pursuers. The Prophet beholds the whole course of sin and persecution, and warns them against it, in the order, in which, if committed, they would commit it. Who would keep clear from the worst, must stop at the beginning. Still God's warnings accompany him step by step. At each step, some might stop. The warning, although thrown away on the most part, might arrest the few. At the worst, when the guilt had been contracted and the punishment had ensued, it was a warning for their posterity and for all thereafter. Some of these things Edom certainly did, as the Psalmist prays<sup>1</sup>, Remember, O Lord, to the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, Lay bare, lay bare, even to the foundation in her. And Ezekiel<sup>2</sup> alluding to this language of Obadiah<sup>3</sup>, because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end, therefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee; sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee. Violence, bloodshed, unrelenting, deadly hatred against the whole people, a longing for their extermination, had been inveterate characteristics of Esau. Joel and Amos had already denounced God's judgments against them for two forms of this hatred, the murder of settlers in their own land or of those who were sold to them<sup>4</sup>. Obadiah warns them against yet a third, intercepting their fugitives in their escape from the more powerful enemy. Stand not in the crossway. Whoso puts himself in the situation to commit an old sin, does, in fact, will*

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxxvii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> xxxv. 5. 6.

<sup>3</sup> עֲדִיָּה ver. 5. referring to the thrice repeated אֲרִים כִּיֹּם אֲרִיֹּר. Ob. 13.

15 \* For the day of the LORD is near upon all the

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

heathen: \*as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.

Ezek. 30. 3.  
Joel 3. 14.  
Ezek. 35. 15.  
Hab. 2. 8.  
cir. 585.

16 \* For as ye have drunk upon my holy

Jer. 25. 28, 29.  
Ez. 40. 12.  
Joel 3. 17.  
1 Pet. 4. 17.

to renew it, and will, unless hindered from without, certainly do it. Probably he will, through sin's inherent power of growth, do worse. Having anew tasted blood, Ezekiel says, that they sought to displace God's people and remove God Himself<sup>5</sup>. *Because thou hast said, these two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it, whereas the Lord was there, therefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them.*

15. *For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen.* The Prophet once more enforces his warning by preaching judgment to come. *The day of the Lord* was already known<sup>6</sup>, as a day of judgment upon all nations, in which God would judge all the heathen, especially for their outrages against His people. Edom might hope to escape, were it alone threatened. The Prophet announces one great law of God's retribution, one rule of His righteous judgment. *As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee.* Heathen justice owned this to be just, and placed it in the mouth of their ideal of justice<sup>7</sup>. *Blessed he*, says the Psalmist<sup>8</sup>, *that recompenses unto thee the deed which thou didst to us.* *Blessed*, because he was the instrument of God. Having laid down the rule of God's judgment, he resumes his sentence to Edom, and speaks to all in him. In the day of Judah's calamity Edom made itself as one of them. It, Jacob's brother, had ranked itself among the enemies of God's people. It then too should be swept away in one universal destruction. It takes its place with them, undistinguished in its doom as in its guilt, or it stands out as their representative, having the greater guilt, because it had the greater light. Obadiah, in adopting Joel's words<sup>9</sup>, *thy reward shall return upon thine own head*, pronounces therewith on Edom all those terrible judgments contained in the sentence of retribution as they had been expanded by Joel.

16. *For as ye have drunk.* Revelry always followed heathen victory; often, desecration. The Romans bore in triumph the vessels of

<sup>4</sup> Joel iii. 19. Am. i. 6, 9, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Ez. xxxv. 10, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Joel i. 15, ii. 1, 31.

<sup>7</sup> Rhadamanthus Aris. Eth. v. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ps. cxxxvii. 8.

<sup>9</sup> iii. 7.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

mountain, so shall all the

the second temple, Nebuchadnezzar carried away the sacred vessels of the first. Edom, in its hatred of God's people, doubtless regarded the destruction of Jerusalem, as a victory of polytheism (the gods of the Babylonians, and their own god Coze), over God, as Hyrcanus, in his turn, required them, when conquered, to be circumcised. God's *holy mountain* is the hill of Zion, including mount Moriah on which the temple stood. This they desecrated by idolatrous revelry, as, in contrast, it is said that, when the heathen enemy had been destroyed, *mount Zion should be holiness*<sup>1</sup>. Brutal, unfeeling, excess had been one of the sins on which Joel had declared God's sentence, *they cast lots on My people; they sold a girl for wine, that they might drink*. Heathen tempers remain the same; under like circumstances, they repeat the same circle of sins, ambition, jealousy, cruelty, bloodshed, and, when their work is done, excess, ribaldry, profaneness. The completion of sin is the commencement of punishment. As ye, he says, heathen yourselves and as one of the heathen, *have drunk in profane revelry, on the day of your brother's calamity, upon My holy mountain, defiling it, so shall all the heathen drink continually*. But what draught? a draught which shall never cease, continually; *yea, they shall drink on, and shall swallow down, a full, large, maddening draught, whereby they shall reel and perish, and they shall be as though they had never been*. "For whoso cleaveth not to Him Who saith, I AM, is not." The two cups of excess and of God's wrath are not altogether distinct. They are joined, as cause and effect, as beginning and end. Whoso drinketh the draught of sinful pleasure, whether excess or other, drinketh therewith the cup of God's anger, consuming him. It is said of the Babylon of the world, in words very like to these<sup>4</sup>; *All nations have drank of the wine of her fornications—reward her as she has rewarded you; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double*. All nations are, in the first instance, all who had been leagued against God's people; but the wide term, *all nations*, comprehends all, who, in time, become like them. It is a rule of God's justice for all times. At each and at all times, God requites them to the uttermost. The continuous drinking is fulfilled in each. Each drinketh the cup of God's anger, till death and in death. God employs each nation in turn to give that cup to the other. So Edom drank it at the hand of Babylon, and Babylon from the Medes, and the Medes and Persians from the Macedonians, and the Macedonians

heathen drink continually,

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

from the Romans, and they from the Barbarians. But each in turn drank continuously, until it became as though it had never been. To swallow up, and be swallowed up in turn, is the world's history.

The details of the first stage of the excision of Edom are not given. Jeremiah distinctly says that Edom should be subjected to Nebuchadnezzar<sup>5</sup>. *Thus saith the Lord; make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, and send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hands of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah, and command them to say to their masters,—I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant. Holy Scripture gives us both prophecy and history; but God is at no pains to clear, either the likelihood of His history, or the fulfillment of His prophecies. The sending of messengers from these petty kings to Zedekiah looks as if there had been, at that time, a plan to free themselves jointly, probably by aid of Egypt, from the tribute to Nebuchadnezzar. It may be that Nebuchadnezzar knew of this league, and punished it afterward. Of these six kings, we know that he subdued Zedekiah, the kings of Tyre, Moab and Ammon. Zion doubtless submitted to him, as it had aforetime to Shalmaneser<sup>6</sup>. But since Nebuchadnezzar certainly punished four out of these six kings, it is probable that they were punished for some common cause, in which Edom also was implicated. In any case, we know that Edom was desolated at that time. Malachi, after the captivity, when upbraiding Israel for his unthankfulness to God, bears witness that Edom had been made utterly desolate<sup>7</sup>. *I have loved Jacob, and Esau I have hated, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the jackals of the wilderness*. The occasion of this desolation was doubtless the march of Nebuchadnezzar against Egypt, when, Josephus relates, he subdued Moab and Ammon<sup>8</sup>. Edom lay in his way from Moab to Egypt. It is probable, anyhow, that he then found occasion (if he had it not) against the petty state, whose submission was needed to give him free passage between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba, the important access which Edom had refused to Israel, as he came out of Egypt. There Edom was sent forth to its borders, i. e. misled to abandon its strong fastnesses, and so, falling into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, it met with the usual lot of the conquered, plunder, death,*

<sup>1</sup> ver. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Gloss.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xviii. 3, 6.

<sup>5</sup> iii. 3.

<sup>6</sup> xxvii. 2-4, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Menander in Jos. Ant. ix. 14. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Mal. i. 2, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ant. x. 9. 7.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

yea, they shall drink,

captivity. Malachi does not verbally allude to the prophecy of Obadiah; for his office related to the restored people of God, not to Edom. But whereas Obadiah had prophesied the slaughter of Edom and the searching out of his treasures, Malachi appeals to all the Jews, their immediate neighbors, that, whereas Jacob was in great degree restored through the love of God, Edom lay under His enduring displeasure; his mountains were, and were to continue to be, a waste; he was impoverished; his places were desolate. Malachi, prophesying toward<sup>2</sup> 415 B. C., foretold a further desolation. A century later, we find the Nabathæans in tranquil and established possession of Petra, having there deposited the wealth of their merchandise, attending fairs at a distance, avenging themselves on the General of Antigonius, who took advantage of their absence to surprise their retreat, holding their own against the conqueror of Ptolemy who had recovered Syria and Palestine; in possession of all the mountains around them, whence, when Antigonius, despairing of violence, tried by falsehood to lull them into security, they trans-

and they shall || swallow

[Or, sup up.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

mitted to Petra by fiery beacons the tidings of the approach of his army<sup>3</sup>. How they came to replace Edom, we know not. They were of a race, wholly distinct; active friends of the Maccabees<sup>4</sup>, while the Idumæans were their deadly enemies. Strabo relates<sup>5</sup>, that the Edomites "were expelled from the country of the Nabathæans in a sedition, and so joined themselves to the Jews and shared their customs." Since the alleged incorporation among the Jews is true, although at a later period, so may also the expulsion by the Nabathæans be, although not the cause of their incorporation. It would be another instance of requital by God, that "the men of their confederacy brought them to their border, the men of their peace prevailed against them." A mass of very varied evidence establishes as an historical certainty, that the Nabathæans were of Aramaic<sup>6</sup>, not of Arabic, origin. They were inhabitants of Southern Mesopotamia, and, according to the oldest evidence short of Holy Scripture, were the earliest inhabitants, before the invasion of the Chaldeans<sup>7</sup>. Their country, Irak, "extended lengthways<sup>8</sup> from Mosul or Nineveh to Aba-

<sup>1</sup> Mal. i. 4. <sup>2</sup> See Intro. to Malachi. <sup>3</sup> Diod. Sic. xix. 94-8. <sup>4</sup> See 1 Macc. v. 24-27, ix. 35. Jos. Ant. xii. 8. 3. xiii. 1. 2. Aretas of Petra aided the Romans 3, B. C. against Jews and Idumæans. Ib. xvii. 10. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Strabo's words are, "The Idumæans are Nabathæans, but in a sedition having been expelled thence," [i. e. from the country of the Nabathæans,] "they, &c." The identifying of the Edomites and Nabathæans is a slight error in a Greek.

<sup>6</sup> The Arabian historians assert that the Nabathæans were Syrians; the Syrian writers equally claiming them as Syrians. This was first established out of the original unpublished writers by Quatremère (Nouveau Journal Asiatique, 1833, T. xv. reprinted, Mémoire sur les Nabathéens, followed and illustrated by Larsoe (de Dialect. ling. Syriac. reliquis, Berlin, 1811.) and supplemented by Chwolson (die Ssabier, ii. 1. T. i. p. 697-711, and T. ii. 163, 84.) Their descendants who, according to the Arabic lexicographers, continued to live in "the marshes between the two Iraks," (Djauh. and Kam. in Quatr. p. 54, remained heathen (See Chwolson. i. 821, 2. ii. 629, 664, 6). Whence the Syrians used the name Armoio, (as distinct from Oromoio) "Aramean," to signify "Nabathæan," and "heathen." (Bar Ali, Lex. MS. sub v. See Larsoe, p. 9-16.) Blau (in Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morg. Ges. 1855, pp. 255, 6.) contends that the Nabathæans of Petra were Arabs, on the following grounds: 1) the statements of Diodorus (xix. 94), Strabo (xvii. 2. 34, Ib. 4. 2 & 21), Josephus (Ant. i. 12, 4.), S. Jerome and some later writers. 2) The statement of Suidas (A. D. 980.) that Dussares, an Arab idol, was worshiped there. 3) The Arabic name of Aretas, king of Petra. 4) Arabic names of places, near Petra. Four such are alleged: *Arindela* (if the same as *this* (burundel) 18 hours from Petra (Porter, Handb. p. 58); *Negla*, (site unknown); *Awara*, a degree North, (Ptol. in Reland, 463); *Elji*, close to Petra. But as to 1) Diodorus, who calls the Nabathæans Arabs, says that they wrote *Syriac*; Strabo calls the *Edomites* Nabathæans, and the inhabitants of Galilee, Jericho, Philadelphia and Samaria, "a mixed race of Egyptians, Arabians, and Phœnicians" (§ 34), and

speaks of "Nabathæan Arabia" as a distinct country (xvii. 1. 21) Josephus, and S. Jerome (Qu. in Gen. 25. 13) following him, include the whole country from the Euphrates to Egypt, and so some whose language was Aramaic. As to 2) Dussares, though at first an Arab idol, was worshiped far and wide, in Galatia, Bostra, even Italy (See coins in Eckhel, Tannin, in Zoega de Obelisc. pp. 205-7, and Zoega himself, p. 205). As to 3) the kings named by Josephus, (see the list in Vincent's Commerce, ii. 273.) Aretius, Malchus, Obodas, may be equally Aramaic, and Obodas has a more Aramaic sound. Anyhow the Nabathæans, if placed in Petra by Nebuchadnezzar, were not conquerors, and may have received an Arab king in the four centuries between Nebuchadnezzar and the first Aretas known at Petra. What changes those settled in Samaria underwent! As to 4) the names of places are not altered by a garrison in a capital. Our English names were not changed even by the Norman conquest; nor those of Samaria by the Assyrian. How many live on till now! Then of the four names, none occurs until after the Christian era. There is nothing to connect them with the Nabathæans. They may have been given before or long after them.

<sup>7</sup> "The Nabathæans, who were inhabitants of the country of Babel before the Chaldeans." Babylonian Agric. quoted by Makrizi. Quatremère, p. 61. Chwolson, ii. 606.

<sup>8</sup> Yuent in Notices et Extraits, ii. 446. "Masudi says: The inhabitants of Nineveh formed a part of those whom we call Nabites or Syrians, who form one people and speak one language. That of the Nabites differs only in a few letters, but the basis of the language is the same" (Quatr. p. 59). "The Chaldees" [he means Nabathæans] "are an ancient people who dwell in Irak and Mesopotamia; of them were the Nimrods, kings of the earth after the deluge; and of them was Bakhtnasar (Nebuchadnezzar) and their tongue was Syriac, and they did not disuse it, until the Persians came upon them and subdued their kingdom." (Hajji. Khal. pp. 70, 1.)

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

down, and they shall be as

dan, and in breadth from Cadesia to Hulvan." Syrian writers claimed that their's was the primeval language<sup>1</sup>; Mohammedan writers, who deny this, admit that their language was Syriac<sup>2</sup>. A learned Syriac writer<sup>3</sup> calls the three Chaldee names in Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Nabathæan. The surviving words of their language are mostly Syriac<sup>4</sup>. Mohammedan writers suppose them to be descended from Aram son of Shem<sup>5</sup>. Once they were a powerful nation, with a highly cultivated language<sup>6</sup>. One of their books, written before the destruction of Nineveh and Babylon<sup>7</sup>, itself mentions an ancient literature, specifically on agriculture,

<sup>1</sup> The Syrian Theodorus, quoted in the Alfhest, says that "it was in this language that God spake to Adam." "Adam and his children spoke Syriac; some say, Nabathæan." (Iklwan-alsafa, Quatr. 91.) "The primitive language which Adam spoke was that now used by the Chaldees; for Abraham was Chaldee by birth, and the language which he learnt of his fathers is that still used among us Syro-Chaldees." (Patriarch Michael, Chron. lb. 91, 2.)

<sup>2</sup> "The Syriac writing is that of the Nabathæans and Chaldees. Ignorant men maintain that it is the primitive writing, on account of its great antiquity, and that it is used by the most ancient people; but it is an error." Ibn. Khaldun, lb. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Abulfaraj, p. 74. "Nebuchadnezzar gave Iiananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah, Nabathæan names, Shadrach, &c."

<sup>4</sup> Words of the Nabathæan dialect are preserved both in Syriac and Arabic Lexica. On those in Syriac see Quatr. 104 sqq, Larow, p. 15-26. The Arabic are given by Golius and Freytag.

<sup>5</sup> Masudi, (from Quatr. translation, p. 56.) "Among the sons of Mash, son of Aram, son of Shem, son of Noah, is Nabit, from whom are sprung all the Nabathæans and their kings." "Nabit, son of Mash, having fixed his residence at Babel, his descendants seized all Irak. These Nabathæans gave kings to Babel, who covered the land with cities, introduced civilization, and reigned with unequalled glory. Time has taken away their greatness and empire; and their descendants, in a state of dependence and humiliation, are now dispersed in Irak and other provinces." "After the deluge, men settled in different countries, as the Nabathæans who founded Babel, and the sons of Ham who settled in the same country under Nimrod." "The Chaldeans are the same as the Syrians, formerly called Nabathæans" (lb. p. 59). "The Nimrods were the kings of the Syrians, whom the Arabs call Nabathæans." "The Nabathæans say that Irak was theirs, that the country belonged to them, and that they once possessed it, that their kings were the Nimrods, of whom was the Nimrod in the time of Abraham, and that Nimrod was the name of their kings" (lb. 58); that Irak was named from them, Arian-shehr, land of lions, *arian* (plur. of *aria*) "signifying in Nabathæan, lion." lb. "The last king who fell before Ardeshir (Alexander) was a king of the Nabathæans, who lived in the towns of Irak." lb. 60.

<sup>6</sup> In the 13th century, there were still three chief dialects of Syriac, 1) Aramæan, the dialect of Edessa, Hran, and Mesopotamia. 2) Palestine, that of Damascus, Lebanon, and the coast of inner (i. e. proper) Syria. 3) The Chaldee-Nabathæan, that of the mountaineers of Assyria, and the villages of Irak. (Abulfaraj, Hist. Arab. p. 70.) Of these the Nabathæan was once the purest; afterward, it appears to

though they had not been.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

medicine, botany, and, that favorite study of the Chaltheans, astrology, "the mysteries," star-worship and a very extensive, elaborate, system of symbolical representation<sup>8</sup>. But the Chalthees conquered them; they were subjects of Nebuchadnezzar, and it is in harmony with the later policy of the Eastern Monarchies, to suppose that Nebuchadnezzar placed them in Petra, to hold in check the revolted Idumæans<sup>9</sup>. Diodorus<sup>10</sup> relates that the Nabathæans there "wrote in Syriac" a letter of remonstrance to Antigonus. "A tribe of Babylonians" were still, in the 6th century, "at Karak-Moab" 60 geographical miles from Petra. Anyhow, B. C. 312,

have been corrupted by contact with the proper Chaltheans, and (as is the wont in mountainous districts and among peasants) was debased among an uneducated people. Theodorus the Syrian says, "This language is the most elegant of the Syriac dialects—The inhabitants of Babel spoke it. When God confounded the languages, and men dispersed in different countries, the language of the inhabitants of Babel remained unchanged. As for the Nabathæan spoken in villages, it is a corrupt Syriac and full of vicious idioms" (in Arab. Hist. Quatr. 95.) Barhebraeus says, "Syriac, more than any other language, being spread over countries far apart, underwent changes so great, that those who speak different dialects of it do not understand each other, but require an interpreter, as if they spoke foreign languages. The dialects are three, that of Syria, that of Palestine, and that of the Easterns. This, more than the rest, has adopted very anomalous forms, and assimilated itself to the Chaldee. The Syriac is spoken at Edessa, Melitene, Marde; of those who use the Eastern, the Nestorian Christians are conspicuous." (Gramm. Syr. Quatr. 97.)

<sup>8</sup> In the Fehrest (A. D. 987) it is said that Nabathæan was purer than Syriac, and that the people of Babylon spoke it, but that the Nabathæan spoken in villages was inelegant Syriac." H. Khal. p. 71. ed. Flüg. "The people of Suwad (Babylonia) spoke Syriac, and letters were written in a peculiar dialect, Syro-Persic." (Ibn Mocanna, lb. 76.)

<sup>9</sup> Quatr. 45, 6. "The temples of Babylon were still standing." Id. Ibn Wahshiyyah the Chaldee, who states that he translated the "Nabathæan Agriculture into Arabic from Chaldee," ascribed to it a fabulous antiquity. (ap. Makrizi in Chwols. i. 690.) Ibn Awram, who used it largely, says that it was "built on the words of the greatest wise, and mentions their names and numbers." (p. 8, 9. Chw. i. 706.) "It was adapted to the climate of Babylon especially, and to countries with a similar climate." Sengrit, its original author ap. Ibn Awram, l. p. 82. (Chw. i. 690.)

<sup>10</sup> Quatremère, p. 108 sqq. Chwols. i. 107. "The Chaltheans, before them the Syrians, and in their time the Nabathæans, gave themselves eagerly to the study of magic, astrology, and talismans." Ibn Khalid, in Quatr. 61. "Chwolson states that he has found in the fragments of these different writings, very lofty speculations on philosophy and natural history, and a very remarkable political and social legislation. Libraries are mentioned; all the branches of religious and profane literature, history, biography, &c. appear there very developed." Renan, Hist. d. Langues Semit. iii. 2. T. i. p. 239.

<sup>11</sup> I find this same conjecture in Quatremère, p. 87.

<sup>10</sup> xix. 96.

<sup>11</sup> Steph. Byz. v. Ἀδαρούσις. quoted by Quatremère, p. 87.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

17 ¶ \* But upon mount Zion \* shall be || deliverance, || and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

\* Joel 2. 32.  
\* Amos 9. 8.  
| Or, they that escape.  
| Or, it shall be holy.  
Joel 3. 17.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

18 And the house of Jacob \* shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kinde in them, and devour

\* Is. 10. 17.  
Zech. 12. 6.

Edom had long been expelled from his native mountains. He was not there about B. C. 420, the age of Malachi. Probably then, after the expulsion foretold by Obadiah, he never recovered his former possessions, but continued his robber-life along the Southern borders of Judah, unchanged by God's punishment, the same deadly enemy of Judah.

17. But [And] upon [in] Mount Zion shall be deliverance, or, an escaped remnant, and there [and it] shall be holiness. The sifting times of the Church are the triumph of the world; the judgment of the world is the restoration of the Church. In the triumph of the world, the lot was cast on Jerusalem, her sons were carried captive and slain, her holy places were desecrated. On the destruction of the nations, Mount Zion rises in calm majesty, as before; a remnant is replaced there, after its sifting; it is again holiness; not holy only, but a channel of holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions; (lit. inherit their inheritances,) either their own former possessions, receiving and inheriting from the enemy, what they had lost; or the inheritances of the nations. For the whole world is the inheritance of the Church, as Jesus said to the Apostles, sons of Zion, <sup>1</sup> Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. <sup>2</sup> Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Holiness is its title-deeds to the inheritance of the world, that holiness, which was in the upper chamber in Mount Zion, the presence of God the Holy Ghost, issuing in holy teaching, holy Scriptures, holy institutions, holy Sacraments, holy lives.

18. Having given, in summary, the restoration and expansion of Judah, Obadiah, in more detail, first mentions a further chastisement of Edom, quite distinct from the former. In the first, for which God summoned the heathen, there is no mention of Judah, the desolation of whose holy City, Jerusalem, for the time, and their own captivity is presupposed. In the second, which follows on the restoration of its remnant, there is no mention of heathen. Obadiah, whose mission was to Judah, gives to it the name of the whole, the house of Jacob. It alone had the true worship of God, and His promises. Apart from it, there was no one-

ness with the faith of the fathers, no foreshadowing sacrifice for sin. Does the house of Joseph express the same in other words? or does it mean, that, after that first destruction of Jerusalem, Ephraim should be again united with Judah? Asaph unites, as one, the sons of Jacob and Joseph<sup>3</sup>, Israel and Joseph<sup>4</sup>; Israel, Jacob, Joseph<sup>5</sup>. Zechariah<sup>6</sup> after the captivity, speaks of the house of Judah and the house of Joseph, as together forming one whole. Amos, about this same time, twice speaks of Ephraim<sup>7</sup> under the name of Joseph. And although Asaph uses the name of Joseph, as Obadiah does, to designate Israel, including Ephraim, it does not seem likely that it should be used of Israel, excluding those whose special name it was. While then Hosea and Amos foretold the entire destruction of the kingdom of Israel, Obadiah foretells that some should be there, after the destruction of Jerusalem also, united with them. And after the destruction of Samaria, there did remain in Israel, of the poor people, many who returned to the worship of God. Ezekiah invited Ephraim and Manasseh to the passover<sup>8</sup>, from Beersheba to Dan<sup>9</sup>, addressing them as the remnant, that are escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria<sup>10</sup>. The more part mocked<sup>11</sup>; yet divers of Asher, Manasseh and Zabulon<sup>12</sup>, came from the first, and afterward many of Ephraim and Issachar as well as Manasseh and Zabulon<sup>13</sup>. Josiah destroyed all the places of idolatry in Bethel<sup>14</sup> and the cities of Samaria<sup>15</sup>, of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon even unto Naphtali<sup>16</sup>. Manasseh, Ephraim, and all the remnant of Israel gave money for the repair of the temple, and this was gathered by the Levites who kept the doors<sup>17</sup>. After the renewal of the covenant to keep the law, Josiah removed all the abominations out of all the countries, that pertained to the children of Israel and made all found in Israel to serve the Lord their God<sup>18</sup>.

The heathen colonists were placed by the king of Assyria in Samaria and the cities thereof<sup>19</sup>, probably to hold the people in the country in check. The remnant of the house of Joseph dwelt in the open country and the villages.

And the house of Esau for stubble. At some time after the first desolation by Nebuchad-

<sup>1</sup> Mt. xxviii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxxvii. 15. <sup>3</sup> Ps. lxxx. 1.

<sup>4</sup> x. 6.

<sup>5</sup> v. 15, vi. 6.

<sup>6</sup> S. Mark xvi. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Ps. lxxx. 1.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Chr. xxx. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ib. 5. <sup>10</sup> Ib. 6. <sup>11</sup> Ib. 10. <sup>12</sup> Ib. 11. <sup>13</sup> Ib. 18.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Kings xxiii. 15. <sup>15</sup> Ib. 19. <sup>16</sup> 2 Chr. xxxiv. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Ib. 9. <sup>18</sup> Ib. 33. <sup>19</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 24.

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

them; and there shall not  
be any remaining of the  
house of Esau; for the  
LORD hath spoken it.

19 And *they* of the south

\* Amos 9. 12. ° shall possess the mount of

nezzar, Esau fulfilled the boast which Malachi records, *we will return and build up the desolate places*<sup>1</sup>. Probably during the oppression of Judah by Antiochus Epiphanes, they possessed themselves of the South of Judah, bordering on their own country, and of Hebron<sup>2</sup>, 22 miles from Jerusalem<sup>3</sup>, where Judah had dwelt in the time of Nehemiah<sup>4</sup>. Judas Maccabæus was reduced to<sup>5</sup> *fortify Bethzur*, lit. *house of the rock*, (20 miles only from Jerusalem<sup>6</sup>) *that the people might have a defence against Idumæa*. Maresha and Adoraim, 25 miles S. W. of Jerusalem, near the road to Gaza, were cities of Idumæa<sup>7</sup>. The whole of Simeon was absorbed in it<sup>8</sup>. Edom was still on the aggressive, when Judas Maccabæus smote them at Arrabatene. It was<sup>9</sup> "because they beset Israel round about," that "Judas fought against the children of Esau in Idumæa at Arrabatene and gave them a great overthrow." His second battle against them was in Judæa itself. He<sup>10</sup> "fought against the children of Esau in the land toward the South, where he smote Hebron and her daughters, and pulled down its fortress and burned the towns thereof round about." About 20 years afterward, Simon had again to recover Bethzur<sup>11</sup>, and again to fortify it, as still lying on the borders of Judah<sup>12</sup>. Twenty years later, John Hyrcanus, son of Simon<sup>13</sup>, "subdued all the Edomites, and permitted them to remain in the country, on condition that they would receive circumcision, and adopt the laws of the Jews." This they did, continues Josephus; "and henceforth became Jews." Outwardly they appear to have given up their idolatry. For although Josephus says, "the Edomites account [not, accounted] Koze a god," he relates that, after this forced adoption of Jewish customs, Herod made Costobar, of the sacerdotal family, prefect of Idumæa and Gaza<sup>15</sup>. Their character remained unchanged. The Jewish historian, who knew them well, describes them as "a tumultuous disorderly race, ever alive to commotions, delighting in change, who went to engagements as to a

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

Esau; ° and *they* of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.

\* Zeph. 2. 7.

feast:" "by nature most savage for slaughter." 3, B. C. they took part in the sedition against the Romans<sup>16</sup>, using, as a pretext probably, the Feast of Pentecost, to which they went up with those of Galilee, Jericho, the country beyond Jordan, and "the Jews themselves." Just before the last siege of Jerusalem, the Zealots sent for them, on pretext that the city was betrayed to the Romans. "All took arms, as if in defence of their metropolis, and, 20,000 in number, went to Jerusalem<sup>17</sup>." After massacres, of which, when told that they had been deceived, they themselves repented, they returned; and were, in turn, wasted by Simon the Gerasene. "He not only destroyed cities and villages, but wasted the whole country. For as you may see wood wholly bared by locusts, so the army of Simon left the country behind them, a desert. Some things they burnt, others they razed." After a short space, "he returned to the remnant of Edom, and, chasing the people on all sides, constrained the many to flee to Jerusalem<sup>18</sup>." There they took part against the Zealots<sup>19</sup>, "were a great part of the war<sup>20</sup>" against the Romans, and perished, "rivals in phrensy" with the worst Jews in the time of that extreme, superhuman, wickedness. Thenceforth their name disappears from history. The "greater part" of the remnant of the nation had perished in that dreadful exterminating siege; if any still survived, they retained no known national existence. Arabian tradition preserves the memory of three Jewish Arab tribes, none of the Edomites.

19. And *they* of the South shall possess the mount of Esau. The Church was now hemmed in within Judah and Benjamin. They too were to go into captivity. The Prophet looks beyond the captivity and the return, and tells how that original promise to Jacob<sup>25</sup> should be fulfilled; *Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt break forth to the West, and to the East, and to the North, and to the South; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

number. "The princes of the Idumæans sped like madmen round the nation, and proclaimed the expedition throughout. The multitude was assembled, earlier than was commanded, and all took arms" &c.

<sup>25</sup> Ib. iv. 9. 7. The Edomites were again in possession of Hebron. Simon took it.

<sup>26</sup> Ib. 10. <sup>27</sup> Ib. 11. <sup>28</sup> Ib. vi. 8. 2. <sup>29</sup> Ib. vii. 8. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Gen. xxviii. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Mal. i. 4. <sup>2</sup> 1 Macc. v. 65. <sup>3</sup> Eus. V. 'Aprw.

<sup>4</sup> Neh. xi. 25. <sup>5</sup> 1 Macc. iv. 61. <sup>6</sup> Eus.

<sup>7</sup> Jos. Ant. xiii. 15. 4. <sup>8</sup> Ib. v. 1. 22.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Macc. v. 3. <sup>10</sup> Ib. 65. <sup>11</sup> Ib. xi. 65, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ib. xiv. 33. <sup>13</sup> Ib. xiii. 53. <sup>14</sup> Ant. xiii. 9, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ib. xv. 7, 9. <sup>16</sup> Id. B. J. iv. 4. 1. <sup>17</sup> Ib. iv. 5. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Ant. xvii. 10. 2.

<sup>19</sup> B. J. iv. 4. 2. It would seem from Josephus that their fighting men were already reduced to this



Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

20 And the captivity of  
this host of the children of  
Israel shall possess that of  
the Canaanites even \*unto  
Zarephath; and the cap-

\*1 Kings 17.  
9, 10.

Hosea and Amos had, at this time, prophesied the final destruction of the kingdom of Israel. Obadiah describes Judah, as expanded to its former bounds including Edom and Philistia, and occupying the territory of the ten tribes. *The South*<sup>1</sup>, i. e. they of the *hot and dry* country to the South of Judah bordering on Edom, shall possess the mountains of Esau, i. e. his mountain country, on which they bordered. And the plain, they on the West, in the great maritime plain, the *shephêlah*, should spread over the country of the Philistines, so that the sea should be their boundary; and on the North, over the country of the ten tribes, the fields of Ephraim and the fields of Samaria. The territory of Benjamin being thus included in Judah, to it is assigned the country on the other side Jordan; and Benjamin, *Gilead*.

20. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel, [it must, I believe, be rendered<sup>2</sup>,] which are among the Canaanites, as far as Zarephath, and the captivity of Jerusalem which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the South. Obadiah had described how the two tribes, whose were the promises to the house of David, should spread abroad on all sides. Here he represents how Judah should, in its turn, receive into its bosom those now carried away from them; so should all again be one fold.

Zarephath (probably "smelting-house," and so a place of slave-labor, pronounced Sarepta in S. Luke<sup>3</sup>) belonged to Sidon<sup>4</sup>, lying on the sea<sup>5</sup> about half-way<sup>6</sup> between it and Tyre<sup>7</sup>. These were then, probably, captives, placed by Tyrians for the time in safe keeping in the narrow plain<sup>8</sup> between Lebanon and the sea, intercepted by Tyre itself<sup>9</sup> from

tivity of Jerusalem,  
|| which is in Sepharad,  
'shall possess the cities of  
the south.

21 And \*saviours shall

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

1 Or, shall possess that which is in Sepharad.  
2 Jer. 32. 44.  
3 1 Tim. 4. 16.  
4 Jam. 5. 20.

their home, and awaiting to be transported to a more distant slavery. These, with those already sold to the Grecians and in slavery at Sardis, formed one whole. They stand as representatives of all who, whatever their lot, had been rent off from the Lord's land, and had been outwardly severed from His heritage.

21. And saviours shall ascend on Mount Zion. The body should not be without its head; saviours there should be, and those, successively. The title was familiar to them of old. <sup>10</sup> The children of Israel cried unto the Lord, Who raised them up a saviour, and he saved them. And the Lord gave unto Israel a saviour<sup>11</sup>, in the time of Jehoshaphat. Nehemiah says to God<sup>12</sup>, According to Thy manifold mercies, Thou gavest them saviours, who should save them from the hands of their enemies. So there should be thereafter. Such were Judas Maccabæus and his brothers, and Hyrcanus, Alexander, Aristobulus. They are said to ascend as to a place of dignity, to ascend on Mount Zion; not to go up thitherward, but to dwell and abide in<sup>13</sup> it, which aforetime was defiled, which now was to be holy. He ends, as he began, with Mount Zion, the holy hill, where God was pleased to dwell<sup>14</sup>, to reveal Himself. In both, is the judgment of Esau. Mount Zion stands over against Mount Esau, God's holy mount against the mountains of human pride, the Church against the world. And with this agrees the office assigned, which is almost more than that of man. He began his prophecy of the deliverance of God's people, In Mount Zion shall be an escaped remnant; he ends, saviours shall ascend on Mount Zion: he began, it shall be

the previous clauses. Hence the Chaldee has supplied *b* before כנענים, from the corresponding כנעני, and renders, "which are in the land of the Canaanites." <sup>15</sup> iv. 26. <sup>16</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Phocas, Loc. Sancti. in Ireland, 385.

<sup>18</sup> Russegger, Reisen, iv 145. note. "Sarafend," in which the old name is nearly preserved, (Ireland, *ib*.) is a little inland. It is 4½ hours both from Tyre and Sidon. (Russ. 145, *ib*.) The maps are wrong *id*. <sup>19</sup> Jos. Ant. viii. 13. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Its breadth is nowhere more than ½ an hour, except around Tyre and Sidon, where the mountains retreat somewhat further. In some places they approach quite near to the shore." Rob. ii. 472.

<sup>21</sup> In the term, "the Canaanites as far as Zarephath," the starting-point is naturally the confines of Canaan and Israel, and so Zarephath is the furthest point N. of Judah.

<sup>22</sup> Judg. iii. 9, 15.

<sup>23</sup> 2 Kings xlii. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Neh ix. 27.

<sup>25</sup> not על nor אל but ב.

<sup>26</sup> Ps ii. 6, lxxviii 16.

נכני. The difficulty arises from the necessity of supplying something to fill up the construction of אשר כנענים *lit. which the Canaanites*. Our translation, following the Latin, has, shall possess that of the Canaanites. In this sense, we should have expected אשר כנענים, *את אשר belongs to the Canaanites*, the object having, in all the preceding instances, been marked by the *אשר* כנענים. *אשר* not being the Hebrew for "that which belongs to." On the other hand, the Hebrew accent, the parallelism, and the uniform use of the accusative here, point to the rendering, "which are among the Canaanites," which is that of the Chaldee, while the construction is that of the LXX. and Syr ונתת ונתת החל הזה לכני ישראל אשר with ירושלים; and then the remainder, "shall inherit the cities of the South," ירשו את ערי הדר, is the predicate of both, in exact correspondence with

Before  
CHRIST  
cir. 587.

come up on mount Zion to  
judge the mount of Esau ;

and the <sup>b</sup> kingdom shall be Before  
the LORD's. CHRIST  
cir. 587.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 22. 28. Dan. 2. 44. & 7. 14, 27. Zech. 14. 9. Luke  
1. 33. Rev. 11. 15. & 19. 6.

holiness ; he closes, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's. To judge the mount of Esau. Judges, appointed by God, judge His people ; saviours, raised up by God, deliver them. But once only does Ezekiel speak of man's judging another nation, as the instrument of God. <sup>1</sup> *I, the Lord, have spoken it—and I will do it ; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent ; according to thy ways and according to thy doings shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God.* But it is the prerogative of God. And so, while the word saviours includes those who, before and afterward, were the instruments of God in saving His Church and people, yet all saviours shadowed forth or back the one Saviour, Who alone has the office of Judge, in Whose kingdom, and associated by Him with Ilm, <sup>2</sup> *the saints shall judge the world, as He said to His Apostles<sup>3</sup>, ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* And the last words must at all times have recalled that great prophecy of the Passion, and of its fruits in the conversion of the Heathen, from which it is taken, the twenty-second Psalm. The outward incorporation of Edom in Judah through Hyrcanus was but a shadow of that inward union, when the kingdom of God was established upon earth, and Edom was enfolded in the one kingdom of Christ, and its cities, whence had issued the wasters and deadly foes of Judah, became the sees of Christian Bishops. And in this way too Edom was but the representative of others, aliens from and enemies to God, to whom His kingdom came, in whom He reigns and will reign, glorified for ever in His Saints, whom He has redeemed with His most precious Blood.

*And the kingdom shall be the Lord's.* Majestic, comprehensive simplicity of prophecy ! All time and eternity, the struggles of time and the rest of eternity, are summed up in those three words<sup>4</sup> ; Zion and Edom retire from sight ; both are comprehended in that one kingdom, and God is *all in all*.<sup>5</sup> The strife is ended ; not that ancient strife only between the evil and the good, the oppressor and the oppressed, the subduer and the subdued ; but the whole strife and disobedience of the creature toward the Creator, man against his God. Outward prosperity had passed away, since David had said the great words<sup>6</sup>, *the kingdom is the Lord's*. Dark days had come. Obadiah saw on and beyond to darker yet,

but knits up all his prophecy in this ; *the kingdom shall be the Lord's*. Daniel saw what Obadiah foresaw, the kingdom of Judah also broken ; yet, as a captive, he repeated the same to the then monarch of the world, *the hammer of the whole earth*, which had broken in pieces the petty kingdom of Judah, and carried captive its people<sup>7</sup> ; *the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed*. Zechariah saw the poor fragments which returned from the captivity and their poor estate, yet said the same<sup>8</sup> ; *The Lord shall be king over all the earth*. All at once that kingdom came ; the fishermen, the tax-gatherer and the tentmaker were iscaptains ; the scourge, the claw, thongs, rack, hooks, sword, fire, torture, the red-hot iron seat, the cross, the wild-beast, not employed, but endured, were its arms ; the dungeon and the mine, its palaces ; fiery words of truth, its <sup>10</sup> *sharp arrows in the hearts of the King's enemies* ; for One spake by them, Whose *Word is with power*. The strong sense of the Roman, the acuteness of the Greek, and the simplicity of the Barbarian, cast away their unbelief or their misbelief, and joined in the one song<sup>11</sup>, *The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth*. The imposture of Mohammed, however awfully it rent off countless numbers from the faith of Christ, still was forced to spread the worship of the One God, Who, when the Prophets spake, seemed to be the God of the Jews only. Who could foretell such a kingdom, but He Who Alone could found it, Who alone has for these eighteen centuries preserved, and now is anew enlarging it, God Omnipotent and Omniscient, Who waked the hearts which He had made, to believe in Him and to love Him ? <sup>12</sup> *Blessed peaceful kingdom even here, in this valley of tears and of strife, where God rules the soul, freeing it from the tyranny of the world and Satan and its own passions, inspiring it to know Himself, the Highest Truth, and to love Him Who is Love, and to adore Him Who is Infinite Majesty !* Blessed kingdom, in which God reigns in us by grace, that He may bring us to His heavenly kingdom, where is the manifest vision of Himself, and perfect love of Him, blissful society, eternal fruition of Himself ; <sup>13</sup> *where is supreme and certain security, secure tranquillity, tranquil security, joyous happiness, happy eternity, eternal blessedness, blessed vision of God for ever, where is perfect love, fear none, eternal day and one Spirit in all !*

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxiv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 2.

<sup>3</sup> 8. Matt. xix. 28.

<sup>4</sup> והיה לי יהודה המלוכה

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. xxii. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Jer. i. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Dan. ii. 44, and vii. 14, 27.

<sup>9</sup> Zech. xiv. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Ps. xiv. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Rev. xix. 6.

<sup>12</sup> from Lap.

<sup>13</sup> Medit. c. 37. ap. S. Aug. vi. p. 125. App.